

**SPECIAL
CHRISTMAS
ISSUE**

THE MAGAZINE OF CINEMA & TELEVISION FANTASY Nº41 70p

STARBURST

HEAVY METAL

THE MOVIE REVIEW &
COLOUR PICTURES



BECAUSE YOU DEMANDED IT!
THE RETURN OF FANTASY FEMALES

WE INTERVIEW FANTASY DIRECTOR
MICHAEL ARMSTRONG

GENESIS OF A MOVIE COMPANY
THE HISTORY OF AMICUS PART I

PLUS FEATURES ON PRODUCER/DIRECTOR
WILLIAM CASTLE, 1950s FILM POSTERS,
ROLE-PLAYING GAMES, AND LOTS MORE



SHOCK TREATMENT

THE NEW FANTASY MUSICAL FROM THE ROCKY HORROR TEAM

MICHAEL ARMSTRONG

WOLFEN



HEAVY METAL

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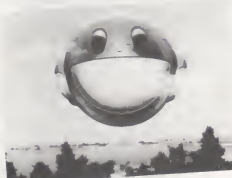
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STARBURST LETTERS

BETTER LATE...

I thought you might be interested to learn that John Boorman has won another award. The somewhat less-than-well-known Celtic Film Festival held at Theatru Ardudwy Harlech in August 1981 awarded first prize (what this was is unknown) to his "fantasy classic of Celtic originality and mythology," *What? Excalibur?* No, actually it's *Zardoc*. Possible better never than late but there we are. *Zardoc* is listed as 1973—so is this long-awaited award some kind of record for films?

P.J. Page,
Wales.

We think that it would actually be more complimentary to win an award after all this time. After all, what the Celtic Film Festival was actually saying is that there hasn't been a film since 1973 more deserving of an award... we think!

THREE POINTS

First thing; in the wake of Pip Reeve's letter (*Starburst* 39), I think it's a good idea to print contradictory reviews of films where a great difference of opinion exists. I thought *Excalibur* was an excellent film, even if it wasn't Malory (and since when have film-makers ever worried about being faithful to their sources?) But John Brosnan's comments, though interesting, didn't put me off a repeat viewing by any means.

Second thing: it's good to see *Blake's 7* back on the box, although clearly it's too early to say how Soolin and the new ship will work out. I was a little disappointed that Cally's death was skirted over so casually—after all her time with the crew you'd expect some of them to display a bit more sorrow, particularly in view of the way relationships were built up in the last series (and I'm thinking especially of Tanith Lee's *Sarcophagus* episode). I dare say they could be excused on the grounds that they had more pressing problems. However... the second episode was, I think, one of the best (and funniest) we've seen.

Third thing: I didn't expect anyone would produce an SF media mag to beat *Starlog*, but they did! Well done!

Ms K. Woodhams
London SE24

Starburst is actually a fantasy media mag, Ms Woodhams! But thank you nonetheless.

MORE PAGES?

Firstly, congratulations on the new-look, expanded *Starburst*. Having been an enthusiastic reader for over two years now, it's been interesting and refreshing to see *Starburst* grow into the quality magazine we have today. But let's not stop here—more pages and a cover price of £1 can't be far off!

Otherwise, the mag is great. The permanent *Starburst* crew are always a pleasure to read, particularly the film and TV columns. However, I hope we haven't seen the last of Tise Vahimag's tv flashbacks (such as his comprehensive guide to *The Outer Limits*).

Keep up the *Blake's 7* and *Doctor Who* coverage, despite them having their own magazines.

And, onto two recent films. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is one of the best movies to hit me for ages. The atmospheric, classy direction is reminiscent of *Close Encounters* whilst Lucas' pacing and direction mix the best of *Star Wars* to produce a fast-moving, simplistic film. Okay, it has nothing to say, but it is enjoyable! Let's hope Lucas and Spielberg can join together again.

As to *Excalibur*. I don't agree with John Brosnan that *Clash of the Titans* is better (the effects were shoddy in places with a bland script), but I do agree that it could have been a bit shorter and that the spoken word didn't quite match the epic quality of the action. As a spectacle, it was a superb fantasy. But it wasn't perfect by any means. Still, let's hope it encourages more films in this genre. Which reminds me, when is *Conan* to be released?

Keep up the world's best magazine.

Michael Robb,
Chelmsford,
Essex

Conan looks set for an Easter release in the United States, Michael. As for over here—it's anyone's guess!

CRITICS CRITICISED

I was pleased to see in the latest *Starburst* letter column (issue 39) that Alan McKenzie had decided to take the mainstream film critics to task for their ignorance. My own particular pet hate is the type of herangerue masquerading as reviewer who, in the course of making some obscure political point, blithely discloses about half the

plot. The instance which sticks in my mind is the idiot who gave away the punch-line to the master-swordsman-in-arab-market.

place gag about two weeks after the release of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

However, just because newspaper film critics are lacking in the gentlemanly graces of *Starburst* reviewers, it doesn't necessarily follow that anything they like is rubbish. I'm talking about *Outland*.

It was obvious from the first trailer that *Outland* bore elements of *High Noon* and being obvious, 90% of newspaper reviewers dubbed this film "High Noon in Space." However, to propagate the delusion that *Outland* is a futuristic remake of *High Noon* would be ridiculous as saying that *The Eagle* has landed is a remake of *Went the Day Well* and I was Monty's Double.

There is no police element in *High Noon*. In fact, the hired killers appear during the title sequence and the film is concerned with Gary Cooper's attempts to drum up support for the big gunfight he knows will take place when Jack Miller steps off the noon train; and comes looking for revenge.

DOCTOR WHO REPEATS



I've just received *Starburst* 37. As I expected, it is brilliant, wonderful, etc.

But... not one word on BBC2's upcoming *The Five Faces of Doctor Who*. Surely the re-screening of the first ever *Doctor Who* story deserved a little mention? By the way, any idea what stories will follow *An Unearthly Child*?

Tim Munro,
Dalton,
Huddersfield.

You're right, Tim. We should have mentioned the *Doctor Who* repeats.

Personally, I like the first half of *Outland* better than the second half, which was quite predictable and slow. But I think *Outland* deserves some credit for being the first film since *Soylent Green* to competently tackle the futuristic detective theme.

The rest of the magazine was interesting as usual, but before anyone writes in to complain that you should be so from cover to cover and nothing else, I'd like to register my appreciation of *It's Only a Movie*. This column is the first thing I turn to each issue. I find it constantly entertaining and I've almost forgiven John Brosnan for having a go at *The Invaders*.

Graeme Bassett,
Gimsby,
Humberstone.

Alan McKenzie replies: "I think you're being a little unfair, Graeme. You're putting words in my mouth then taking me to task for them. Nobody said anything newspaper critics like is rubbish. I only registered a personal disappointment with the film *Outland*. But John Brosnan is beaming from ear to ear..."

Though in our own defence, we do give complete coverage to the *Doctor Who* phenomenon in our sister magazine *Doctor Who Monthly*. The first episode of *An Unearthly Child* is to be screened at 5.50pm on 2nd November. The stories that follow will be *The Krotons* (Patrick Troughton as the Doctor) *Caravan of Monsters* (Jon Pertwee), *The Three Doctors* (William Hartnell), *Patrick Troughton and Jon Pertwee* and *Logopolis* (Tom Baker and Peter Davison). And still on the subject of *Doctor Who*...

Like many discerning people I am a great fan of **Doctor Who**.

The most shocking horror story I've heard in recent years concerns the shameful destruction of English heritage. Namely, the destruction of old **Doctor Who** tapes by the BBC.

Without being facetious, I must call this irresponsible.

However, what's done is done. What I want to know is, if there is any way to save the episodes that still exist, before they too get pulverised for lack of space to store them in.

Is there any organisation or individual devoted to the saving of **Doctor Who** for posterity? Because with luck most of Tom Baker's and Jon Pertwee's still exist and can be saved.

Just think of all the William Hartnell and Patrick Troughton stories that are now lost forever. Let's not allow this to happen again.

Perry Armstrong,
 Lower Hutt,
 New Zealand.

You are not alone in your concern. Sue Malden of the BBC Archives has been striving diligently to complete the BBC's run of **Doctor Who** episodes. A complete run-down on the episodes held and the work of the BBC Archives is published in this year's **Doctor Who Winter Special**, available from all good newsagents. Or if in difficulty see our ad on page 62 this issue.

GOE FANS STRIKE BACK

I never did like Tony Crawley's thoughts and reviews but in issue 37, he just shined in his true colours as a pig-headed, two-faced "1%"!! I'm referring to his discussion with



Above: A scene from the grisly Caroline Munro-starring horror movie **Maniac**. See "Gore Fans Strike Back". Opposite page: A scene from the Three Doctors story, repeated in the BBC's Five Faces of Doctor Who.

Judd Hamilton in *Things To Come* about **Maniac**—"because there is tragically an audience for it, what you should do is make a movie about them..."

Judd: You're right. **Maniac** is a bad piece of blood and gore. We'll have a big success from an audience that shouldn't exist. Now I'd like to make a film about that audience... you know they think this guy's a freak...

Crawley: What about them!

Judd: Exactly!

So that's what Tony thinks about cinemagoers, horror film fanatics and readers of **Starburst**. We're the freaks! When the truth of the matter is that it's the producers who churn out trash like **Maniac** who are freaks and that includes

Judd Hamilton!

Tony may not have a high regard for us followers of film fantasy but that gives him no right to insult, ridicule and generally imply that people who watch horror films such as *Dead of the Dead*, *Friday The 13th* or indeed even **Maniac** are a bunch of gibbering looneys. When he starts patronising the very audience it just goes to show what a really bad film critic he obviously is.

Derek Gray,
 Aberchirder,
 Scotland.

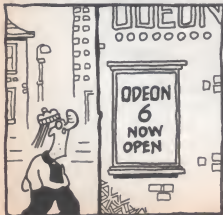
Tony Crawley replies: "John Brosnan would probably agree with the last line, but hopefully little else. At no time did Judd Hamilton

(bravely running down his own film) or myself discuss **Starbursters** by name or inference—none of whom had seen **Maniac** at that time. Rather than being gibbering looneys, freaks (witness The Yorkshire Ripper, Lennon's killer and Reagan's near-assassin) never appear to be what they are. The same can be said of the recent glut of movies issued in and despoiling the name of horror and fantasy. A bad film critic, therefore, is the one failing to label these films for the rip-offs they are—and all the more so given today's high cinema prices. But Mr Gray can't have it both ways. If he thinks certain films are trash, what else can one call their audiences—no matter which magazine they devour monthly. And there are likely to be as many freaks among our readers as in any other mass group of people, whatever they are: football supporters, pot-holders, wind-surfers, cricket fans, fox hunters or journalists."

We regret that we cannot enter into correspondence with individual readers. There just aren't enough hours in the day!

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FLICKERS BY TIM QUINN & DICKY HOWETT



THINGS TO COME

STAR TREK—THE TRUTH

Paramount seems at last to have sorted its act out and the news about *Star Trek II* is that it's *not* for television at all. (Or not until it's been a cinema hit and sold to the box). You can believe this. It comes from the horse's mouth... no higher up the ladder of control at Paramount than the company's president, Michael D. Eisner. Says he, "Contrary to all the unconfirmed reports and speculations about this project, *Star Trek II* has always been intended as a full-length motion picture for release in the US and Canada as well as the international territories." He also insisted the movie would star both William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy, despite the rumours about Nimoy pulling out. (He is acting, though, in the long *Golden* tele-biopic of *Golden* Meir with Ingrid Bergman).

Of course, things can change... because Eisner did say that the film would be released by CIC as well... and as events have it, that's not so anymore...

ENTER: UPI.

The Siamese-twinning of top Hollywood companies continues with the not-altogether shock news that CIC is a thing of the past. I'm sure you're not overly interested in what is really boring film trade news, but because of the sale of United Artists to MGM, and the fact that UA is also a distributor, while MGM distributes through the CIC chain, which already links Paramount and Universal (you are still with me, of course), a new distribution company was required. And that's what's happened. So, from here on, all MGM, Paramount, Universal and United Artists movies will be distributed around the world by a new combine called... United International Pictures. UIP. What with Columbia EMI and Warner Brothers already together in another distribution deal in most Euro-countries this news leaves the other two majors alone out there. 20th Century-Fox and Disney. And there's talk of them combining operations... in Britain at least. Whether this is good news for the filmgoer is a matter for lengthy discussion. Some good little films do get lost in the (c)rush.

ALVES INVADERS

After all his sterling work as production designer on such films as *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Escape from New York*, Joe Alves has landed a directing assignment. The movie...? A remake of the 1953 classic *Invaders from Mars* (see *Starburst* 13).

The fascinating aspect about this piece of news is that it's yet another example of history repeating itself. The original *Invaders from Mars* was directed by the late, great William Cameron Menzies. Menzies himself was a pro-



duction designer, working on films like *Gone With the Wind* and *Thief of Baghdad*. His directing debut came with the 1936 classic *Things to Come* after which this very column is named.

Should be interesting to see how Joe tackles his remake. Though we think he should change his name to Joe Cameron Alves...

NANCY'S OUT

Minor surgery has forced Brian De Palma's wife, Nancy Allen, out of the very film she needs so badly—*Endangered Species*, originally called *S.W.O.C.* That's the one that is not helmed by hubby but Alan Rudolph. Needing time to recuperate after the operation, Nancy has to pass her role over to Joseph Williams—one of Tobe Hooper's stars in the Steven Spielberg production of *Polyester*.



KAREN'S IN

The other female Allen we all tend to drool about at the *Starburst* offices—*Raiders'* Karen Allen—has lately completed her first movie role since the Lucasberger. She's *Captured* in Ted Kottcheff's new film. Co-stars include Michael O'Keefe (from *The Great Santini*, not the new *Tarzan*), Peter Fonda, Jimmy Woods and Michael Sachs, who hasn't been seen enough since *Slaughterhouse Five* and Spielberg's *Superland Express*. Karen has, I hear, about two more movies to get finished before reporting for the *Raiders* sequel in '83.



FANTASY SPECIAL

British casting director Irene Lamb has obviously had her fill of fantasy movies just lately. (Is there any other kind around?) And she's liked what she's seen. Just look at the actors she's gathered together for the American TV-movie of *Ivanhoe*, currently shooting for six weeks at Pinewood studios. James Mason for, if nothing else, *Salem's Lot*... Sam Neill, the final Damien in *The Final Conflict*, not forgetting his odd, very odd, French horror, *Possession*... Julian Glover, this year's Bond nasty in *For Your Eyes Only*... and John Rhys-Davies, the great (224lbs) Welsh Arab, Sallah, in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Irene obviously relaxes with radio and tv, too. Her *Ivanhoe*, jumping into Roger Moore's old telly series role, is *Danger* UXB's Anthony Andrews—and also in the film is dear old Michael Hordern from Radio Four's half-year-long serial of *Lord of the Rings*. Must be some rare old stories on that set. Douglas Canfield directs the movie—which like producer Norman Rosemont's other telly remakes (*Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, etc) will be released to cinemas in Britain and Europe.

STATE'S STATE

I have good news from West German wunderkind director Wim Wenders. His film about the filming of an sf film (you still with me?) is all over bar the shouting in the editing rooms. This is the movie he was due to have made straight after his second American debut for his new godfather, Francis Coppola. However, the second film—*Trap Door* with Chris Reeve—never got going, and indeed godfather Francis first wanted a lot of additional lensing done on Wim's debut in the States, *Hammett*. And so, with more free time on his hands than first planned, Wenders was able to split to Portugal and *State of Things*. He shot for a fortnight in Hollywood as well—on a budget that must have made Coppola blanch. A mere \$800,000—collected in a week and with no script to show the bankers, either!

Interesting little tale it is, too. Wenders' story (scripted by an American in Paris, Robert Kramer) has a film unit suddenly strapped for funds while shooting a real B of a B-movie on sunny location. (What they're making is a re-tread of Allan Dwan's st quickie, *The Most Dangerous Men Alive* (1961), by the way). French actor Patrick Bauchau plays the director, with that grizzled veteran Hollywood director Sam Fuller as his cinematographer. Others in the cast include Allen Goornitz (ex-Garfield), Paul Getty Jr and the once-upon-a-time Andy Warhol superstar, Viva. Judging by the speed which Wenders has shot it (with top French cameraman Henri Alekan), *State of Things* could be on release before his Hollywood debut, *Hammett*, is even adjudged ready by Coppola.

PARIS FEST

As usual, I'm afraid, there's more horror than science fiction at the upcoming eleventh Paris Festival of Science Fiction and the Fantastic. Fans of the gross and the gory are too late to book for the hovercraft now—the public could buy tickets for the screenings at the Grand Rex cinema, 1, Boulevard Poissonniere (take the Metro to Bonne-Nouvelle) between November 12 and 22.

Entries at the time of writing included Charlie Kaufman's *Mother's Day*, Boaz Davidson's *X-Ray* (from the folk who gave you *Lemon Popiscle*, which may or

may not be a recommendation); Jeff Lieberman's *Just Before Dawn*; Tony Maylam's American debut, *The Burning*; Tom De Simone's *Hell Night*. Joe D'Amato is sending two from Italy, *Blue Holocaust* and *Antrophophages*. Spain is repaid by Paul Naschy's *Return of the Werewolf* and Hong Kong offers *Don't Play with Fire*, directed by Hark Tsui.

I'm more interested in seeing Johnny Hough's *The Incubus* from Canada, with John Cassavetes—and that film from Cannes, Caroline Munro and Joe Spinell in *The Last Horror Film*.

There's more... Also expected are *Friday The 13th, Part 2*, in case you missed it (how could you miss that?)

Full Moon High from Larry Cohen; Sergio Dardano's *Hell of the Living Dead* sheer hell, I gather, and rather surprisingly, David Gladwell's EMI film, *Memoirs of a Survivor*. This one stars Julie Christie and, as we saw in Cannes, is neither fantastic nor *fantastique*, although it's set, and drags on and on, after the end of the next war.

Alein Schlockoff, who founded the festival eleven years ago and is still running it, tells me he'll be continuing the Hammer retrospectives the event is known for. This year's crop will include three of the *Hammer House of Horror* tele-films.



A selection of poster art for some of the Hammer horror films on show at the Paris Fantasy Film Festival. At top left, the promotional artwork for the *Linde Bleir* vehicle *Hell Night*. I wonder if she ever gets fed up with horror movies.

THINGS TO COME

MORE MAYLAM

... and mayhem? With his Hollywood debut behind him, British director Tony Maylam (*Riddle of the Sands*, remember?) has swiftly set up two more films over there. First, he has Anthony Perkins starring in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (I was about to say in the umpteenth version, but surprisingly, the Oscar Wilde tale has still only been filmed the twice, with Hurd Hatfield in 1945 and pretty Helmut Berger in the exploitation version of 1974). Then Maylam really joins the big boys—directing *Passion Play*, another book from the *Beating the Odds* author, Jerry Kosinski. Central character, like Kosinski, is a polo player. But very carnal... Not quite the movie to premiere before Prince Charles or his Dad. Oh, I don't know though.

THING III?

Hard on the heels of John Carpenter and *The Thing* company, British director John Irvin is Arctic bound. For another kind of sf thing. The film is *Iceland*, scripted by Chip Prosser from the John Drimmer novel, and co-produced by Norman Jewison and Patrick Palmer. They're the couple who gave Irvin his big movie break with *Dogs of War* after his tv success with John Le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy*. I doubt if there'll be much work for Rob Bottin however on this paper. The thing found in the Irvin film is human.

CHART PREDICTIONS

Some months yet before my Fantasy Film Chart slide-rules is required, but the '81 box-office winners are obvious, insurmountable between now and the end of the year. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* romps it, having earned 125 million dollars in America alone by September. *Superman II* is in 2nd place, about 24 mil' behind. The surprise, up until the last figures, is that Bond is way down in sixth place, beaten by the likes of such rubbish as *The Cannonball Run* and *Stripes*, and Alan Alda's rather better crafted *Four Seasons*. *Tarzan*, *The Age Men* (and considering Bo's acting, that is a real fantasy movie!) and *Clash of the Titans* aren't far behind, which is fair... isn't Bo Derek one of Harryhausen's rather better model efforts? I expect the *For Your Eyes Only* figures to be bigger when the world returns are counted. It's been a smash just about everywhere and has just opened in France, on all three main circuits (which has never happened before) with a total of 166 prints!

KING COHEN

Remember Herman Cohen? Oh c'mon, of course you do. How could anyone forget the instigator of *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957) the dreaded *Konga* (about as tame as the dance; in 1961), *Black Zoo* (1963), *Berserk* (1968) and

other forgettables... Well, Herman is alive and well and living, where else, but LA. He has a new company. And a new movie. *Cobra* and *Cocodile*. Or was it *Crocodile* making *Cobra*?

SON OF SCHLOCK

A real piece of horror schlock is doing overly good business around American cinemas. (Just goes to show, they've no taste at all). It's called *Doctor Butcher*. His MD, says the hype, is for Medical Deviate. The ad drivel goes on: "He is a depraved sadistic rapist. A bloodthirsty killer. And he makes house calls." Hm! Something about the distributors rings a bell. Aquarius Releasing Inc. of New York. But didn't they... yes indeed... That's the outfit which first released *Deep Throat* in the States. It's not only porno directors turning to graphic horror, then.

MORE SCHLOCK

And still John Landis has nothing to do with it... That alleged director from Spain, Juan Piquer Simon (*Superheroic Man*, et al) is preparing Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Curse of the Pharoaks* as a Spanish-British co-production. He's also talking turkey with Peter Cushing for it. He'll probably get him, too. He did

for his Jules Verne movie, *Monster Island*. While the chat goes on, Simon is into *Sae Devils* from another Verne book. No big stars this time. Just a big title. In Spanish it reads: *Los Diablos del Mar*... very—but very—close to the Spanish title for *Jaws*.

QUICK TAKES

Believe it or not, Robin Williams is due to have a baby in the new season of *Mork and Mindy*... Stephen King's newie, *Cujo*, shot to the top of America's best-sellers, while his *Firestarter* remains No 1 in what the New York Times called the mass-market lists (I think that means us, folks!)... Adrienne Barbeau (Mrs John We-know-who) due out in, or with Was Craven's, *The Swamp Thing* around March. Her co-star is BBC's one-time *Dracula*, Louis Jourdan... Chris Reeve's co-stars in *Monsignore*, in Rome, now include Genevieve Bujold, from *Coma*, and that suave Spaniard Fernando Rey from the *French Connection* movies... And what—oh hang on, I'm just taking a call from the gynecological unit—WHAT? Oh really. You sure? Okay. Well, it seems that *Mork's* baby will be bulky comic Jonathan Winters. Orkian kids are, well, born that way, it seems. Full grown!

DEATH GIGGLE

Add one more horror-film spoof to the growing list. Tim Bond is directing a tv-movie in Canada (for cinemas abroad) send-up called *Till Death Us Do Part*. He'll have to change the title for Britain, of course. His stars are not Werren Mitchell and co, but Montreal beauty Helen Hughes and Stacy Keach's brother, James—he who dubbed the literally unspeakable Clinton Spilsbury in Law Grade's latest flop, *The Legend of the Lone Ranger*.

NESSIE RETURNS

Never did learn what happened to David Frost's once-upon-a-prime movie plans for a film about Nessie. Too late! He's been beaten to it. Hollywood had dug up Nessie (well, they're running out of summer camps tales, I guess). *The Loch Ness Horror* is currently before cameras, real close to home, at Lake Tahoe, California... with a second-unit at the real Loch Ness. Looks like being a family movie. It's co-written and directed by Larry Buchanan, produced by Jane Buchanan and stars Berry Buchanan...

TITLE TANGLE

Allen pal, Michael Murphy, young Dan Messiah of *Evil*. That movie, with the Shore and another of our exports to LA, always very fetching Marianna Hill, is Louise Fletcher's down-under creepy, and now it seems New Zealand, Fione now on release as *Dead People*. *Dead Kids*, is now called *Strange Behaviour*. It figures. It is! Her co-stars similar happening for George Lucas Hey, where you goin' tonight? Oh, I'm remain the same (well, the film is long writer pals Willard Huyck and Gloria off to see *Dead People*... Hah! since finished you see). They're Woody Katz' debut as director-producer,



THINGS TO COME

STEVE'S SECRET

In total secrecy (or so you thought, huh, fella?) Steven Spielberg has finally been shooting 'the little kids' film he was supposed to follow *CEK* with. But then, a little thing called 1941 erupted in his psyche and damn nearly wrecked him. George Lucas and Francois Truffaut kept on at Steve to make his small movie. So that's what he's doing. It's called *A Boy's Life*.

... & NOT SO SECRET

Although he never went to the University of Southern California's film

school, like many of the other "movie brats", Steven Spielberg has lately donated a hefty \$500,000 to help pay for the University's new music-sound stage. He's not alone in such largesse, either. George Lucas, the school's star pupil, has chipped in as much as \$4.7 million for the new USC cinema-tv complex (it's damn near a complete studio in itself now). Other contributors helping to meet the \$7 million bill include Jack Nicholson, *Star Trek* director Robert Wise and even singer Helen Reddy. The reason these names aren't so quiet about their praiseworthy generosity is that another \$7 mil' is needed... and the Hollywood studios, counting their summer profits with

glee, just couldn't care less.

Lucas says he's "rabid" about their indifference. Says George in an uncharacteristic outburst: "The studios do not realize that people have to be trained to be effective, no matter how talented they are. They think young filmmakers are created by agents in a back room with a lump of clay! I knew nothing about making films before I got to USC... It made me what I am today. I want to be able to grow some more filmmakers like that."

Says Steven, "Who's going to take our place? It's just silly for the industry not to replenish the well. If they don't look to the future, who will?"

The USC school needs the money

because it's had much the same equipment for 42 years. "It's like a cinema ghetto," adds Steven. "It's the sort of like teaching kids to fly in the jet age with old bi-planes."

Hollywood's view seems to be so what? *The stuff worked okay on Lucas, Coppola, Milos and Co. Backward thinking by the so-called majors.*

TELLY LOLLY

Mork and Mindy's tele-budget jumped up another \$25,000 from \$300,000. Must be all that baby food for Jonathan Winters... *The Incredible Hulk*, not killed off after all, is now among the most expensive tele-weeklies at \$650,000 a throw—just like you would you believe, *The Love Boat*, and *The Little House on the Prairie*. The reel winners, *Dallas* and *Law Grant*, cost just a smidgen less—\$625,000.

BRADBURY MOVIE

All the chat, the hype and the paperwork is finished and Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is finally being shot at Disney. Classy production too. Our Jack Clayton directs from Ray's scenario, with a cast headed by Jason Robards, now over his jungle-fever illness that made him leave Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* in Peru. Also in the acting team, Britain's Jonathan Pryce. The movie is produced by Kirk Douglas's third son in movies, Peter Vincent Douglas.

TAKES II

After a great year, what with *Altered States*, *The Janitor* and now Larry Kasdan's steamy *Body Heat*, William Hurt—the star find of '81—kicks off '82 opposite his idol, Jimmy Casney (aged 83) in Ivan Passer's *The Eagle of Broadway*... Look out, Mel Brooks tells me he's writing a space comedy next. His provish title is *Galactic Mishogoo*—oh, go ask your Jewish friends for the translation... Before tackling the late Robert Shaw's role in *The Sting* sequel, burly Oly Reed is delivering the *Death Bite* to, or with, Peter Fonda, up in Toronto... Doug Trumbull's big sf movie, *Brainstorm*, recently written up in an American trade paper as *Brainstorm*. With my typing, I should complain... but Monty Python could sue! (Good name for an Indy Jones rival, though. *Brian Storm!*)...

Madrid's annual sf and fantasy fest has been re-scheduled for April 16-24 to avoid any clash with those titans, the American Film Market and the Cannes Festival... That's still too early a date for Canada's new space thriller, *Shuttle*, which is still collecting the ten-million smackers it needs before shooting can begin next summer... *Starburst* friend and dream, Sybil Danning into a US-West Germany combo called *Julie Darling*. (Isn't she, though!) I also hear it's between Sybil and French siren Brigitte Lahaie for the main femme role in the *Flash Gordon* sequel...

LOOKS FAMILIAR!

Change the cap and maybe the lady's tight jeans—but what we have here, friends, is an obvious *Raiders* rip. Nothing to do with the sequel it's part of the poster-art for "a modern adventure of danger and suspense." Like wow! It's a new movie called *Mother Lode*, written and produced by a certain Fraser Clarke Heston end directed and starring his dad, Charlton Heston. (Fraser played Moses as a babe in the bullrushes in *The Ten Commandments*.

Not a lotta people know dat).

The couple in the cave are the film's young hero and his girl. Kim Basinger is the update of Karen Allen (Kim's best remembered for her *Cat and Dog* tv series). The fella is Nick Mancuso, out and about again recently in the *Nightwing* flop, double-billed with Susan George's flop, *Enter The Ninja*. He's a good actor though, one of the hits of the 25th London film festival with his *Teorima* festival award-winning work in Canada's *Ticket to Heaven*, about

the Moonie religion. Poor guy, he was so damned good in that he won a *Mission Impossible* rip-off series called *Unit 4*... and now the Heston gold-mining sage (complete with cuddly rats in the lower right-hand corner). Nick deserves something better. *Unit 4* will not be it. You know it's a loser because his co-star is Ben Murphy the Paul Newman look-alike always trying for a hit show—*Alias Smith and Jones*, *Gemini Men*, *Griff*, *The Chisholms*. And he's never made it yet.

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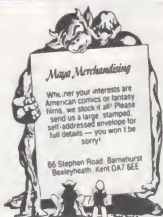
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WILLIAM CASTLE

Feature by
Arthur Ellis

We present the first of a four chapter examination of the career of horror showman extraordinaire, William Castle.



Above: William Castle on the set of *Day of the Locust*. Inset: A scene from *Homicidal*.

"This is the fright break. You hear that sound? The sound of a heartbeat. Is it beating faster than your heart? Or slower? This heart is going to beat for another sixty five seconds to allow anyone to leave this theatre who is too frightened to see the end of the picture, and get your FULL ADMISSION REFUNDED. Ten seconds more and we go into the house. It's now or never. Five Four You're a brave audience. Two One."

Thus the highly memorable denouement of *Homicidal* begins: A lush blonde vamp with the now standard issue kitchen knife who also turns out to be a baritone male. Also? At the film's conclusion you aren't too sure whether our maniac is the man dressed up as the blonde or the blonde dressed up as the man,

seeing as how they both take a curtain call together, courtesy of split screen. Affectionately (and by most critics unaffectionately) known as King of the Gimmicks Showman, Director, Producer, Writer, Actor William Castle reigned pretty well supreme in the horror field from the late 50s for just over a decade.

Driven by one main brief he eventually made his films to suit the promotional gimmick that invariably led to their box office success. The brief was quite simple, to "scare the pants off America".

One of the earliest practitioners of 3D in feature films he used the process in *Fort Ti*, a western, after getting a thumbs down on a perhaps more suitable project *Earth to the Moon* a couple of years before. Castle had been extolling the virtues of 3D for sometime, having seen an MGM short in his childhood days that attempted to offer, crudely, the same basic effect. But it wasn't until the proven commercial success of the process in a film called *Bwana Devil* that Castle was given the go-ahead for his 3D excursion.

From 3D he graduated to the marvels of *Percepto*, *Emergo*, *Illusion-o*, *Ghost Viewers*, *Fright Breaks* and the superlative *Punishment Poll*, until finally reaching the reasonably

desperate measure of handing out blood spattered cardboard axes to the audience for *Strait-Jacket* in 1964.

Between 1943 and 1956 Castle made a batch of 8 movies, mainly under Harry Cohn's rule at Columbia although occasionally being loaned out to other studios. Wanting to transcend the obvious restrictions and material of the Bs, Castle's requests for A movie status were consistently turned down. Adroit within the confines of these support films he remained where he was.

Watching the French film *Diabolique* in 1958 gave Castle the impetus to go for broke on his own, similar, much derived, murder mayhem production, *Macabre*.

Purchasing the rights to a novel called "The Marble Forest"—discovered to have been written by not one but thirteen authors—Castle organised a screenplay, hocked his house and shot the film in nine days. When viewing the rough cut he realised that something was missing, the film didn't have an edge. So he put a call through to Lloyds of London.

"I'd like an insurance policy."

"For yourself, sir?"

"No. I want to insure everybody in the world... in case they drop dead."



Above left: Off set during the filming of *The Tingler*, Castle reacts for the camera. Although it is unlikely that you can see it in this picture Castle is wearing nail varnish, and his watch reads just after six, which means this shot was probably taken in his own time. What does this tell us? Above right: A particularly effective scene in *The Tingler*. The actress was attired in a grey bath robe and the set was dressed in shades of grey. But the bath was filled with red stage blood. When the camera craned up, so that the audience could see the contents of the bath, the effect was devastating! Right: Redford was the first choice for the role of Guy Woodhouse in *Rosemary's Baby* but he and Paramount were in dispute at that time and he was handed a subpoena during a lunch meeting with director Polanski. That effectively scotched his chances. John Cassavetes was cast for the part three days before shooting commenced.



At first, naturally, everyone else concerned with the distribution of *Macabre* thought the idea of insuring an entire theatre-going audience against their demise stank, but the extraordinary success of the gimmick (The poster blurb ran: "See it with someone who can carry you home") proved its worth, and a 90,000 dollar investment made a staggering return of five million dollars.

Enter William Castle as Independent. The Distributors Allied Artists, naturally, wanted another such picture immediately and the exhibitors wanted another Castle gimmick. The hastily contrived *The House on Haunted Hill*, starring Vincent Price before his AIP heyday, was the result. The plot involved a group of people invited by a millionaire, Price, to stay the entire night in the abode of the title. If they made it until morning they'd each receive a fat cheque for their troubles.

Subconsciously perhaps the storyline echoed the publicity stunt for the previous film, and once more the influence of *Diabolique* could be seen at the film's climax—a supposed half rotted, near skeletal body rising from a vat of acid, the final touch in Vincent Price's calculated catalogue of misery geared to despatching his wife,

herself nurturing a murderous conclusion to their soured marriage.

It was at this point in the film that Emergo, *Haunted Hill's* gimmick, was brought into play. A 12ft skeleton EMERGED (I'm afraid it's that cheap) from a black box beneath the theatre's screen, and, worked by the projectionist, was winched through the auditorium, over the audience's heads. Cheap and crude as maybe, not to mention the "effects" reliance on each individual projectionist's sense of timing, the low budget idea did its job and the financial rewards reaped by all concerned consolidated faith in Castle's maxim.

This sense of fun—the scaring of an audience in this somewhat detached, theatrical way diminished the truly affecting and disturbing horror overtones—was the driving force behind each picture. For Castle to see and feel the audience react at an instant was what it was all about.

Some 30 years prior Castle, lucky enough to catch Lugosi's stage portrayal of Dracula (and later to work in the theatre with him at Lugosi's request) would pay his price of entrance solely to observe the audience and their shocked reactions as the workings of the

plot unfolded.

An understanding of his audience was Castle's great strength. He provided them with subjects that he himself would have paid to see. Later his career took a commercial dive when he decided to try and opt out of the exploitation field and try the more acceptable modus operandum of employing established, well-known artists. He had also hoped to be able to sell the films on the basis of their worth alone, without them being coupled with a detracting gimmick. But it wasn't to be.

One morning in 1967 the unrevised proofs of a recently written novel found their way onto Castle's desk. Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby*. For Castle things began to pick up a little.

However, between the opening of *Macabre* and Castle's introduction to an arrogant, narcissistic Roman Polanski in London there is a wealth of superlative cinema and gimmickry and showmanship, orchestrated by the man who gave you such gems as this, used for the poster blurb on *13 Ghosts*.

"Warning! If you should only count 12 Ghosts on the screen don't feel cheated—one of them likes to mingle with the audience!"

Starburst Christmas Quiz



elementary

1. What is a horror film without victims? Name the characters and the actors who played them.
a) the first victim of *The Alien* (1).
b) the first victim of *The Howling's* Eddie Quist (1).
c) the first victim of Norman Bates (1).
2. Name the cat in *Alien* (1).
3. From which films do the following quotes come?
a) "Inspector Clay is dead. Murdered. And somebody is responsible" (1).
b) "It went for a little walk!" (1).
c) "For a man who has not lived even one lifetime, you are a wise man (1).
4. Which films featured...
a) *The Fear Flasher and The Horror Horn* (1).
b) *The Fright Break* (1).
c) *Emerg-o* (1).
5. What sort of beasts starred in the following movies...
a) *The Monster That Challenged*

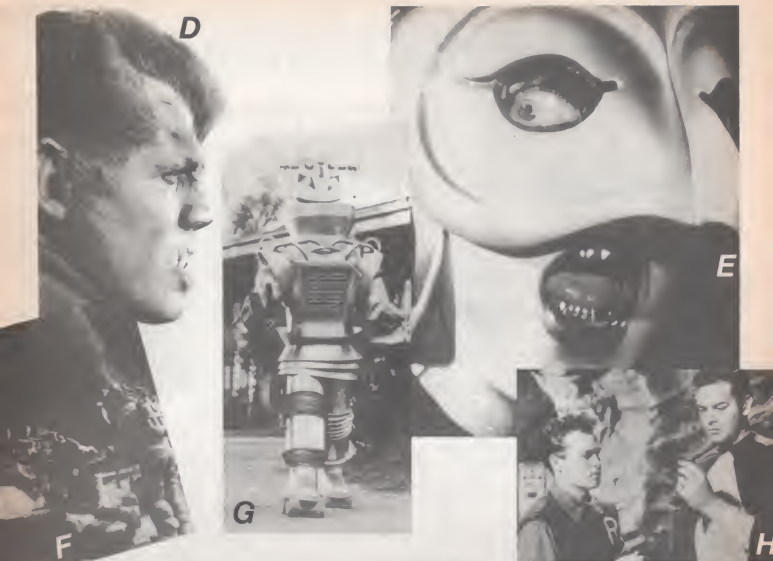
the World (1).
b) *Squirm* (1).
c) *The Giant Claw* (1).

6. More quotes. This time name the actors speaking (1 point for each) and the films in which the lines are spoken (another point for each).
a) "What we need is young blood... and brains!"
b) "Hoi, have you got the wrong vampire!"
c) To new worlds of gods and monsters!"
7. Name the writer whose fantasy books were filmed by the following directors (1 point) and give the film titles in each case (another point for each).
a) Bryan Forbes.
b) Román Polanski.
c) Franklin J. Schaffner.
8. Name the actress-turned-authoress best known for her Hammer movies (1). And what is the title of her first novel (1).
9. In which film did Jessica Harper escape selling her soul to the Devil

(1)? Who directed the movie (1)?
And who played the Devil (1)?

intermediate

10. A person, film or character links the following groups. Give the links (1 point for each).
a) *Things to Come* (1936), *Thief of Bagdad* (1940), *Invaders from Mars* (1954).
b) Douglas Trumbull, Joe Alves, Greg Jein.
c) *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, *Bride of the Monster*, *Glen or Glenda*.
d) *I Walked with a Zombie*, *The Cat People*, *The Body Snatcher*.
e) *I Walked with a Zombie*, *The Cat People*, *Night of the Demon*.
f) Walter Hill, Dan O'Bannon, Ridley Scott.
g) Jack O'Halloran, Sarah Douglas, Terence Stamp.
h) Robert Fuest, Ernest Borgnine, John Travolta.
11. Name the only actor ever to win an Oscar for a horror role (1).
12. In which film does Lionel Barrymore



disguise himself as an old lady and sell dolls which kill (1)?

13. Which Italian rock band provided the soundtrack music for Dario Argento's *Suspiria* (1)? Name three other films they provided music for (1 point for each).
14. And still on the subject of movie music, name two rock musicians who wrote their first film scores for recent fantasy films (1 point for each).
15. Which illustration was the first to come to life in *The Illustrated Man* (1)?
16. How many chapters made up...
 - a) *Flash Gordon* (1).
 - b) *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars* (1).
 - c) *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* (1).
17. Which popular leading actor featured with Boris Karloff in two Roger Corman productions (1). Name the films (1 point for each).
18. Who belongs to the following pseudonyms (1 point for each).
 - a) John Elder.
 - b) Sydney Aaron.
 - c) Lewis Coates.
19. a) In which film did a girl discover her dead mother had sold her soul to the Devil on her 21st birthday? (1)

b) Which film featured the demonic possession of the 17th Century nuns of Loudoun? (1)

20. Who composed the classical music featured in *Alien* (1). Name the piece (1).
21. In which Edgar Allan Poe film was Terence Stamp decapitated? (1).

Picture Quiz

- A. Tom Tyler as Captain Marvel from the 1941 Republic serial of the same name. But can you give the title of the Universal Mummy film in which he played the Mummy? (1)
- B. Elsa Lanchester as the Bride of the Creature in *Bride of Frankenstein*. But what other role did she play in that film? (1)
- C. No prizes for identifying Peter Boyle. But who is the swooning actress? (1)
- D. Name the film, the character and the actor (1 point for each).
- E. Name the actor and the recent Tobe Hooper film he appeared in (1 point for each).
- F. Name the three characters and the actors who played them (1 point for each).
- G. Name this character (1).
- H. Yes, it's Batman and Robin, all right, but who are the actors (1 point for each)?

A. The Mummy's Hand (1940). B. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. C. The Devil's Daughter. D. The Devil's Daughter. E. The Devil's Daughter. F. The Devil's Daughter. G. The Devil's Daughter. H. The Devil's Daughter.

Picture Quiz

A. The Mummy's Hand (1940). B. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. C. The Devil's Daughter. D. The Devil's Daughter. E. The Devil's Daughter. F. The Devil's Daughter. G. The Devil's Daughter. H. The Devil's Daughter.

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WOLFEN

Review by Phil Edwards

As I said in *Starburst 34*, 1981 would shape up to be the *Year of the Wolf*. Nearly all the films I mentioned back in that article have surfaced, with the exception of *Full Moon High*.

But don't let me mislead you, *Wolfen* is not a werewolf movie. Exactly what it is I'm not sure, but don't let my uncertainty put you off what is, for the most part, an enjoyable film.

Wolfen tells the story of a series of bizarre killings in the derelict South Bronx district of New York. Throats are ripped out, bodies dismembered and various organs missing.

The police are at a loss to know who or what is at the root of the trouble. So they call in semi-retired hot-shot cop Dewey Wilson, played by Albert Finney sporting a none-too-reliable New York accent. To assist the disillusioned Dewey there's Rebecca Neff, an equally hot shot psychologist essayed by Diane Verona. Ms Verona is certainly attractive, if at times reminding one of Genevieve Bujold's younger sister—if indeed she has one.

The film opens with a well-orchestrated triple murder, which goes some way to proving the theory of the twitch of the death nerve. It's in the opening that we are introduced to the Wolfen themselves, if only subjectively. Through a process of computer enhanced optical effects we see and hear

(courtesy of the Dolby system) what the Wolfen see and hear. Pretty effective this, but after an hour we realise that director Michael Wadleigh is going to rely on these devices for most of the shock value of the film.

It seems that *Wolfen* had considerable problems. Exactly whose fault those problems belong to is anybody's guess this long after the event. And really who's interested anyway. What we're concerned with here is the finished film. *Wolfen* is quite stunning to look at thanks to Gerry Fisher's camerawork and Garrett Brown's prowling Steadicam, which substitutes for the eyes of the Wolfen.

What ultimately lets *Wolfen* down and stops it being anywhere near a genre classic



This spread: A series of scenes from the Warner release *Wolfen*, which stars Albert Finney as the New York policeman Dewey Wilson who finds himself caught up in a pitched battle between Mankind and a pack of super-intelligent wolves.



is the script, credited to Wadleigh and David Eyre. No doubt all you aging hippies out there will recall that Wadleigh directed *Woodstock* and there's a little bit too much of the Spirit of '67 lurking in the script for *Wolfen*. There's quite a lot of *Concern for Social Issues*, ranging from the *Treatment of the American Indian in Modern American Society*, to *Insinuations About Big Business*, through such relatively minor issues as the *Decayed State of the South Bronx* and the *Misunderstanding of the Wolf*. But don't get me wrong. These really are important problems and ones that have been dealt with in cinema in the past and no doubt will be in the future.

What I question is this. Do they belong in what is basically a glossy horror movie? At least the film's distributors are selling it as that. Perhaps Mike Wadleigh intended something quite different. Apparently much of *Wolfen's* shock/gore footage was added after completion of Wadleigh's version. If it was, then full marks to the editors, for it is integrated flawlessly. The make-up effects of Rick Baker protégé Carl Fullerton are indeed startling, though I'm not too sure *how* a wolf, even a super-intelligent one, can so neatly lop a man's head off.

I honestly hate to recommend that any movie made in Dolby should be seen that way. If a film is good it should stand on its own merits of writing, direction, editing and performances and be equally impressive as a work in any format, even on a twelve inch black and white television. However, I have a feeling that *Wolfen* may suffer when seen without the benefits of Dolby. Nearly all the aural shock effects are going to be dissipated when put thorough some of the poor excuses which pass for sound systems in cinemas in this country. It just might be worth the trek to see it in Dolby.



Review by Alan Jones

shock treat

Bored by the movies around at the moment that are a poor excuse for entertainment? Well, "You need a bit of *Shock Treatment*. It gets you jumping like a real live-wire", to quote from the title song of the new Richard O'Brien musical fantasy film and the latest extension of his preoccupation with that perfect American couple Brad and Janet, last seen in his enormously popular late night cult movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Make no mistake about *Shock Treatment* it is as entertaining and as funny as *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, perhaps even more so as it is a totally new entertainment, the first film being slightly dulled by over familiarity with the show. More importantly it is one of the best-directed British films for ages—even if only an nth of the praise heaped on something like *Chariots of Fire* should be directed towards *Shock Treatment*, it would be far more deserved. In the wasteland of the British Film Industry the fact that such an adventurous film should be backed at all is a surprise.

Once again the town of Denton is the starting point for the film except that in this case, the town is a television studio, (one of the best ideas to occur to the makers when they couldn't film on location in the US due to the actor's strike). Here the mythical suburban community has become so dominated by television that life itself has become one giant television show. It's a lifestyle complete with commercial breaks, day-time marriage counselling, medical series and soap operas. Brad and Janet Majors (*Cliff de Young* and *Jessica Harper*) suddenly find themselves participating in the





fantasy females '81

Starburst looks back over 1981 and presents a picture gallery of the loveliest Fantasy Females of the year.







Preceding spread, left hand page. Main picture: The sultry Elisabeth Brooks lived up to the already lively Joe Dante picture *The Howling*. Inset top: Ursula Andress appeared briefly in the Ray Harryhausen spectacular *Clash of the Titans*, though only had one line! Inset centre: The blond girl in *For Your Eyes Only*, Caroline Bouquet. Inset below: Cherie Lunghi was John Boorman's *Guenevere* in *Excalibur*. Cherie is, according to editor Alan McKenzie, even more beautiful in real life than she is in the movie. Right hand page. Main picture: Linda Korrige is Marilyn in the as-yet unreleased *Fade To Black*. Inset top: Jennie Agutter co-starred in the John Landis shocker *An American Werewolf in London*. Inset below: Karen Allen played the obligatory Lawrence Kasdan-style fleshy female in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. This spread, opposite page. Top row, left to right: Barbara Bach in *Caveman*, Nancy Allen in distress in *Dressed to Kill*. The lovely Glynnis Barber in *Blake's 7*. Centre row, left to right: Adrienne Barbeau in *Escape from New York*, Jennifer O'Neill in *Scanners*. Bottom row left to right: Shelley Long gave a better impression as a Fantasy Female than Barbara Bach in *Caveman*. Long-time Fantasy Female Barbara Carrera returned to the fold with the Disney spy movie *Cordorman*. Joanna Lumley continued in her role as Sapphire in the tv series *Sapphire and Steel*. This page, left: The late Dorothy R. Stratten as she appeared in the as-yet unreleased *Galaxina*. Below left: Jane Seymour appeared opposite Superman's Christopher Reeve in *Somewhere in Time*. Below right: What fantasy females gallery would be complete without a picture of the very lovely Caroline Munro?





MICHAEL ARMSTRONG

Michael Armstrong directed David Bowie in his screen debut. Michael Armstrong had a choice between 60s teen-idols Fabian and Frankie Avalon as the star of his first horror film. Michael Armstrong appeared in a sex film with a topless Diane Keen. Michael Armstrong directed one of the most controversial horror films of the 70s. Who is Michael Armstrong?

When the credit squeeze prevented his play, *The Rise and Fall of Armageddon* from transferring to the West End, actor/writer Michael Armstrong decided to become a movie director. It was a field he could say he knew something about as he had made a home horror film called *Nightmare* when he was 12 years old. His first step on the ladder of success was to cast Ian Ogilvy and Simon Dee in a film about Satanism called *The Initiate*. "But it was strong stuff for those days and the censor objected to the script. I was going to shoot it at weekends on 16mm." Undaunted, Armstrong then tried to arouse interest in another script he had written called *A Floral Tale*, which was a fantasy satire about Greek Gods and Goddesses. It was this script that found him in the offices of Border Films and although they liked it they thought it was a bit ambitious for someone who had never directed before. They then asked him if he would like to do a short film for them first. "And the result was *The Image*. It was 14 minutes long, Black and White, shot in 2½ days, and starred David Bowie who I had become friendly with because I had wanted him to do the music for *A Floral Tale*. "The film was originally meant to be a ghost story with a twist at the end. "However, we ended up with 7½ minutes of screen time which meant that when I cut it, I had to make it arty with flashbacks and forwards to extend it. It must be the only film in history to grow twice as long in the cutting room." The film attracted a modicum of attention when Border released it with *Sex in the Grass* although, as Armstrong comments, "What that particular audience made of it is anyone's guess!"

Enthusiasm at a high level, Armstrong dug up a script he had written when he was 15 years old called *The Dark*. After one brush with a dubious financier who Armstrong is convinced had Underworld connections, John Trevelyan, the censor at the time put him in touch with Tony Tenser of Tigon films. "He read the script on Thursday, phoned me on the Saturday and I signed the contract on the Monday. I got paid £300 which seemed like a fortune, so I got a nice flat and waited". And waited, until penniless once again and sleeping on Victoria station he decided to phone his agent for help, "And found out that

Tenser had done a co-production deal with American International Pictures and that shooting was to start immediately."

His experiences on the film that was to be released in 1969 as *The Haunted House of Horror* are ones that he still feels reticent to talk about. "It involved a lot of political backstabbing which I was totally unaware of until I became the fall guy. The major problem

was with Louis "Deke" Heyward from the American side who had jeopardised his position in A.I.P. and saw my film as an effort to reassert himself. The story behind *The Haunted House of Horror* is everything that should not happen to a young director." Made on a budget of £80,000 and shot principally on location at the 100-year-old Birkdale Palace Hotel at Southport which had

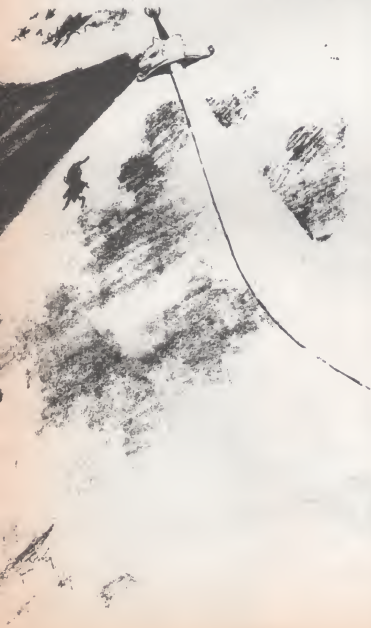


AE ONG

been turned into a film studio by art director Hayden Pearce. *The Haunted House of Horror* concerned a group of bored youngsters who decide to continue a party in an old dark, supposedly haunted, house and the reverberations when one of their number is viciously—and for the time, gorily—hacked to death. "Frankie Avalon had to be the star as he had been under contract to AIP and owed

them some days work. It was for this reason also, that I nearly had to have Boris Karloff in a cameo role. David Bowie was going to be the killer but the part eventually went to Julian Barnes, (who subsequently was awarded "Best Newcomer" in Films and Filming's yearly awards), and I had originally approached singer Scott Walker for the part played by another singing star, Mark

Wynter". After four weeks of shooting, Armstrong watched as another director, Gerry Levy (a Tigon in-house producer/director) who had made the appalling *The Body Stealers*, reshot and added scenes that distorted his original concept of the film. "My film was a cynical attack on the swinging '60s and they changed that perspective. ➤



Left: A stunning production drawing for the unrealised project *The Enchanted Orchestra*, which Michael Armstrong was working on under his Fantasia Productions banner. Above: Advertising/promotional art from another project that failed to get off the ground, *The Curse of Tittikhamon*. The idea was to do a Mummy film as a song-and-dance musical.

They also changed the explorations into the psychological motivations of the killer, which were that he was gay and had a sort of closet-queen murderous mentality". The final indignation came when Armstrong was cutting a picture for Border Films called **The Hunt**. The cutting rooms overlooked Tigon's offices. "And I watched as a poster was put in the window for **The Dark** on the Tuesday and replaced on Thursday with one for **The Haunted House of Horror**. I stormed round to Tony Tenser and was told that I had to think commercial". **The Haunted House of Horror** was released in the UK with a lack-lustre thriller called **Clegg**. In America it fared better as simply **Horror House** on its first release with Tigon's **Curse of the Crimson Altar** and on its re-release with the Helmut Berger **Dorian Gray**. Needless to say Armstrong didn't make a penny out of it but it paved the way for his next film, the controversial, and still banned in this country, **Mark of the Devil**.

The reviews that greeted **Mark of the Devil** on its release in 1972 were nearly all of this nature—"Unbelievably gory and totally sadistic voyage into witch-hunting with little or no plot, intelligence or sense of decency."

The vehemence with which the critics greeted the film was probably due to the very historical nature of the plot. It was based on fact, was shot in the actual location it all took place in and in most scenes used the actual torture instruments themselves. This was what the critics couldn't handle—vampires and werewolves are in the realms of fantasy and therefore escape the violent criticism that Armstrong's film and his friend, Michael Reeves' **Witchfinder General** before him had levelled at them. The film is as grim and intense now as it was then, (something we British can now say, thanks to its release on video by Intervision), and Armstrong defends this by saying that to him the worst sort of violence is the sort you don't look away from.

Exploitation was certainly the hook on which to hang the script when Armstrong was first approached about the film. "Adrian Hoven, the film's producer had written this script called **The Witch-Hunter Dr Dracula**, Gloria films in Germany said they would put up the money and distribute it. Herbert Lom tentatively said he would be in it but Gloria wouldn't accept Hoven as the director. As **The Haunted House of Horror** had done well in Germany they settled on me and I agreed to do it as I was told I could change the script if I didn't like it. When I did read it I was horrified—it was very nearly hard core porn with Dracula masquerading as a Witchfinder, driven in a coach by an Egyptian Mummy, with lots of mutilation and a sort of Hitler speech at the end."

Armstrong rewrote the entire script under the pseudonym Sergio Cassner and found that although Herbert Lom approved, Hoven went berserk, and from the moment he arrived in Germany, he and Hoven had daily screaming matches, until Hoven cast himself in it in a minor role (although he had been a matinee idol in the war years, Gloria wouldn't accept him as the star either) and went off to shoot those scenes himself. Armstrong had taken Hoven's lurid script and fashioned a morality tale about Count Cumberland (Herbert Lom) arriving in a tiny Austrian village to take over as official witch executioner from Albino (Reggie Nalder—more recently seen as the vampire in **Salem's Lot**). Against this backdrop of mutual hate and eventual murder unfolds three true stories—Gaby Fuchs as a girl accused of blasphemy when she says she was raped by a bishop and has her tongue torn out to silence her, a young Baron (Michael Maïen) whose inheritance is coveted by the Church and are therefore trying to prove he is a warlock, and



This spread: A series of production drawings from the unrealised project, **The Enchanted Orchestra**.

a married couple (Hoven and Ingeborg Schoener) who are arrested while giving a puppet show with no explanation as to how the puppets work. The catalogue of torture is many and varied—the rack, the Spanish boot, water torture, burning at the stake, thumbscrews and more, and there is no let up, which is exactly what Armstrong wanted. "What shocked me, and why I made the film

so brutal was that the methods of torture were so crude! One thinks they were sophisticated, but they weren't at all. I'm amazed how some people withstood it. It was all so matter of fact and I wanted the film to have that sort of barbarous feel to it.

Another aspect that fascinated me was that it was one thing having the local bully doing things but it is another when someone does





them in the name of the church and thinks he's right. This theme gets a bit lost in the picture (Hoven edited it and added the terrible Eurovision score) but it was one of my motivations for doing it. The violence was a way of life too. It was common day, thousands of these deaths occurred as witchfinding had been far heavier in Europe than in Britain". One of the reasons why the

British censor still refuses to pass the film is the juxtaposition of one of the more prurient tortures with a sex scene which according to Armstrong was an imposition by Hoven who still wanted an all-out exploitation film. Even one of the actors, Udo Kier who plays Cumberland's pupil, said that all his scenes were reaction shots and he didn't know what he was reacting to. "Nonsense", says

Armstrong, "Udo and Herbert were in the studio when I filmed these scenes". Mark of the Devil cost £120,000 and was shot in 6 weeks. On the third day of shooting the production manager threw all the production schedules in the air and announced he was going on holiday. From then on the shoot was chaos. Some actors would arrive at one location, some at another. Often two or three



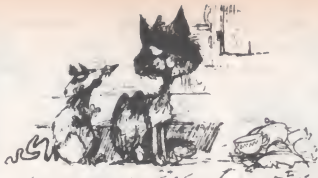
actors would disappear to Munich to do a commercial that no-one knew about and to cap it all Adrian Hoven hadn't had the scripts printed up and the crew found they were working from scraps of paper. Ultimately it didn't matter—*Mark of the Devil* was the number 1 film in Germany that year and it made a fortune for Hallmark in America, who released it with the gimmick of free vomit bags where it has gone on to be a cult film.

The United Kingdom is the only place the film hasn't been shown, in every other market it has been considerably successful, so successful in fact that a sequel was released in 1974, *Mark of the Devil Part II*, which was directed by Adrian Hoven, even though initial overtures had been made to Armstrong. The film sank without a trace and Hoven then directed *The Terrible Quick Sword of Daingerling* starring none other than Sybil Danning.

Shattered and disillusioned by these two emotionally draining experiences Armstrong decided to earn his living as just a writer. "I decided to say yes to everything. I compromised. Anything I cared about would go on the shelf and wait. Producer Harry Allan Fowers wanted me to direct a film called *Flesh and Blood* with Christopher Lee based on Burke and Hare, the bodysnatchers and what I should have done in retrospect is go to America and cashed in on the huge success of *Mark of the Devil*". This resolution coincided with an old director friend of his, Martin Campbell, scraping some money together for a sex film for Tigon. "They asked me to write it and the result was *The Sex Thief*. I added comedy, got good actors and decided to act in it myself with Diane Keen."

The Sex Thief did reasonably well at the box-office mainly because it was the first sex film to be released in mainstream cinemas rather than just the specialist showcases. The mix of comedy and semi-nudity was somehow more acceptable to general audiences. *Esquimo Nell* followed and in writing it and starring in it as himself, Armstrong found a platform to vent his spleen at Wardour Street as the story concerned an idealistic young director who is swindled and artistically stifled by a group of unscrupulous entrepreneurs. Armstrong says that most of the situations were based on fact and that 70% of the dialogue consisted of actual quotes.

Somewhat vindicated by *Esquimo Nell*, Armstrong went on to write for a number of television shows including *The Professionals*, *Triangle*, *Shoestring*, *Return of the Saint* and more recently two children's puppet series called *Toad's Army* and *The Ants of the Round Mushroom*, the latter involving chromakeyed rod puppets. However two major film projects were in the works both of which were cancelled when the monies failed to materialise at the last moment. "One was *The Curse of Tittikhamon* which would have beaten *Airplane* in the lampoon stakes. I had written it years earlier as *The Sex Curse of Tittikhamon* but I liked it so much that I decided to desex it, raised 2/3 of the money and went looking for a distributor. Suddenly, out of the blue, one of our investors withdrew his money and it folded." The demise of this musical comedy based film was the subject of a *Man Alive* television programme and there is little doubt that it would have been a successful movie. Armstrong has a taped re-enactment of the script which he played to would-be investors and it is often hysterically funny as it tells of Tittikhamon's search for Princess Nefertiti and the confusion caused when the British Museum decide to merchandise Nefertiti love-rings to the general public, the only identification Tittikhamon has of his lost love.



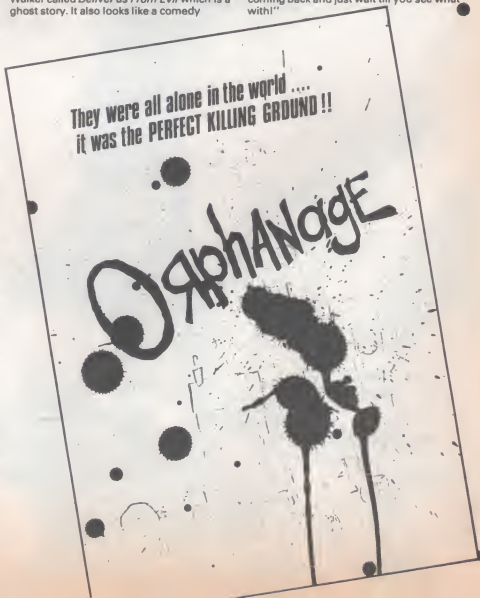
The other halted production is one that Armstrong is still upset about and one he hopes he can return to in the near future. It is *The Enchanted Orchestra* based on the album of the same name and was to be a fusion of animation and live action. "I had started storyboarding it. The scripts had been sent to Deborah Kerr and Audrey Hepburn, the Albert Hall had been booked for shooting, the majority of design work had been completed, we had Bray studios fully operational and the Swiss consortium who had backed us didn't tell us till the last minute that their money had been held up due to the Iranian problems. I watched people who had worked for nothing, myself included, have their enthusiasm for the project turn to bitterness. It took six months to write and was such a labour of love as every single line of dialogue was a famous quote."

Most recently Armstrong wrote *Dreamhouse*, a short that Stanley Long of Alpha films had commissioned as a support to *The Exterminator*. He has also written a screenplay with British Horror director Pete Walker called *Deliver us From Evil* which is a ghost story. It also looks like a comedy

version of *Robin Hood* and will go into production next Spring.

The project that Michael Armstrong is most excited about at the moment is the one he started 18 months ago when producers Clive Parsons and Davine Belling asked him to write a *Halloween*-type movie. "I had seen all the recent horror movies and realised that the only difference in them is the environment. It was always a microcosm of people, and a killer, in a holiday camp, or a school, or on a train—so I thought of what hadn't been used as that sort of device, and I came up with an orphanage." What Armstrong wrote was a totally formula picture and as nothing happened with the story outline he submitted, he shelved it until now.

"*Orphanage* will be strong and uncompromising stuff I promise you that. I've changed it all—it is no longer *Scum* meets *Psycho*. The killer is just a figure, he really isn't that important and it will be told from the children's point of view. I have every intention of coming back—let's face it, I did what they're all doing now—then. Now I'm coming back and just wait till you see what with!"



Left: A production drawing from *The Enchanted Orchestra*. Below: The promotional artwork for *Orphanage*. Opposite: A selection of scenes from the excessively gory horror movie, *The Mark of the Devil*.



HEAVY METAL

Review by John Brennan



Top left: The production art for the movie. Left: Hired killers fire upon the cab of the vicious warriors dominated by the bell. Above: The artwork of the film provides one of the most

Mindblowing is a word that used to be bandied about a lot once upon a time. It was applied to so many things it soon became devalued and a cliché. Well, I'm blowing the dust off it and dragging it back into the limelight.

Heavy Metal is mind-blowing.

There's no other way to describe it. It's a movie that takes your mind and blows it out the back of your skull, especially if you're sitting in the front row. It overwhelms you.

with an onslaught of dizzying images that leaves you mentally gasping at the audacity of the animators—and admiring their skill. **Heavy Metal** is the *Fantasia* of the 1980s—hard, brutal, funny and very unsubtle, with none of the lofty intellectual pretensions of the 1940 Disney movie. It is very much a film of its time.

Conceptually, of course, there's not much to it. It creates its sense of wonder purely on a visual level, mainly by juxtaposing small objects against big ones. This is a device that Ray Harryhausen has often used in his films—as he once said in an interview: "The very big or the very small have always been a source of fascination to me. I like the comparisons of sizes—of great heads looking down on little things, and little things looking up at great heads." Harryhausen has exploited this technique to great effect on many occasions—the sequence in *Jason and the Argonauts* when the statue of Talos comes to life and looks down on the tiny humans is a prime example—but there are limitations to how far you can go with this using the model animation process. With straight animation, however, there are no limitations to the range of sizes you can suggest. The sky is literally the limit. ▶

...the episode, used also as the poster art. (Left) The Lochnar, a kind of evil green bowling ball fantasy illustrator Angus McKie. (Right) Spectacular scenes in the film.



Thus in *Heavy Metal* there are innumerable shots of vast statues and structures dwarfing the human characters, culminating in the sequence where a giant space ship that is so big it blot out the whole of Washington DC with its shadow is in turn reduced to the size of a pig in comparison to a gigantic city in space. The advantage that animation offers is that you can create the illusion that the camera is moving in on an impossibly large object by putting an increasing amount of detail on the screen, something that is impossible to do when zooming in on a three-dimensional model. *Heavy Metal* exploits to the fullest the potential that animation has for creating the War of the Worlds on an almost limitless scale.

Okay, so we're agreed that *Heavy Metal* is a mind-boggling, mind-blowing animation extravaganza but what is it exactly about? Well, I suppose you describe it as a science fantasy story, or rather series of stories, with the emphasis on Syord & Sorcery (or as Harry Harrison once suggested as a more accurate term: "Sword & Butchery"). It can also be described as violent and sexist with a strong element of sadomasochism and even a whiff of fascism, but these dubious ingredients are defused by the movie's predominant sense of fun. The fact that *Heavy Metal* is essentially a comedy is not surprising considering that the Executive Producer, Leonard Maltin, also founder of National Lampoon magazine and a producer of *Animal House*, and that the two main writers, Dan Goldberg and Len Blum, also co-scripted *Meatballs* and *Stripes*.



Heavy Metal consists of six separate stories linked and framed by sequences concerning a mysterious green sphere, called the Lochnar, which represents universal Evil or something. If the film has a serious flaw this is it. Sometimes the green ball fits into the individual stories but at other times it has to be forced into the narrative, with distorting and unsatisfactory results. I suppose some sort of link between the stories was necessary but I wish it had been in a different way (still, it's not as senseless as some of the framing devices around many of the Amicus anthology films).

It begins with an astronaut returning to Earth—in a convertible yet!—with a present for his young daughter. The 'present' is the deadly green sphere which promptly zaps Daddy and then menaces the daughter, telling her of its past triumphs over goodness...

The first story it tells is *Harry Canyon* which concerns a tough-talking taxi driver in a future New York that is even more anarchic and dangerous than today's. He is persuaded by a beautiful girl to help prevent the Lochnar falling into the hands of a criminal gang but she turns out to be just as treacherous as everybody else. It's a kind of private-eye parody, packed with splendid visual jokes, that I found very amusing. It also manages to be much more inventive within the confines of its short running time than the whole of

Carpenter's vaguely similar *Escape from New York*...

Then comes *Den*, created and designed by Richard Corben ('Gore' of underground comics fame). This is an hilarious send-up of a typical sword & sorcery story. Skinny teenage boy inventor, Dan, is suddenly swept through time and space, thanks partly to the Lochnar, to a distant world where he finds he has been transformed into the hulking, mighty-thewed Den. And before he knows it he is up to his jock-strap in naked women, monsters and evil magicians—all the usual sword & sorcery ingredients. But throughout it all he remains, on the inside, the same callow teenager and his 'gee whiz' style voice-owners, provided by John Candy, are the chief source of the humour.

Captain Stern, the next episode, is probably the nearest thing to a 'cartoon' in the picture and also, in my opinion, the least successful section. Captain Stern, who resembles a Mad Magazine version of Superman, is on trial in a giant space station for various disgusting crimes. His defence rests on the evidence of a nerdish-looking character who falls under the influence of the Lochnar on the way to the witness box and turns into a rampaging giant. The subsequent chase through the station is quite amusing but it all leads up to a very unsatisfactory pay-off. One feels it could all have been a lot funnier than it was...

Dan O'Bannon of *Alien* fame supplies the story for the next episode, titled B17 which is a straight horror story in the EC Comics style. Corpes in a bullet-riddled B 17 are taken over by the Lochnar and return to life, sort of. The pilot parachutes to safety but ends up on an island populated by more animated corpses... The graphics are brilliant (Mike Ploog was the designer) but as in the previous episode there's a lack of internal logic for what happens (are we to presume, for instance, that the green sphere is also responsible for the walking dead on the island?).

The fifth story, and my personal favourite, *So Beautiful and So Dangerous*, also lacks a point but it matters less in this case because it is a surreal, free-wheeling romp where the marriage between the visuals and the sound track is at its most successful (music here provided by *Nazareth*). This is the one involving the giant spherical space ship mentioned earlier—for some reason a Pentagon secretary is sucked up into the ship where she has a close encounter with two alien acid-heads, who talk like 1960s hippies, and an amorous robot who not only beds her but later proposes marriage. The sequences where the ship arrives at the unimaginably vast city in space are the most mind-blowing in the movie but unfortunately the episode comes to an abrupt halt at this point, just when it seems to be really starting.

The sixth and final story is also the longest. Called *Tarna* it is a sword and butchery (I mean *sorcery*) fantasy with no humorous content at all. It's also the one with the heaviest quota of sado-masochism which is either a plus or minus depending on your personal taste.

It begins with the arrival of the ubiquitous Lochnar on some planet (possibly a future Earth) where it turns a tribe of desert dwellers into a horde of blood-crazed murderers. When the horde attacks a city of peace-loving softies the elders send out a telepathic SOS to someone called Tarna. We next see a cloaked figure riding a flying creature that looks as if it escaped from a stalling rooster in a Christmas dinner. They arrive at the ruins of a vast structure and land at the foot of a statue about a zillion miles high.

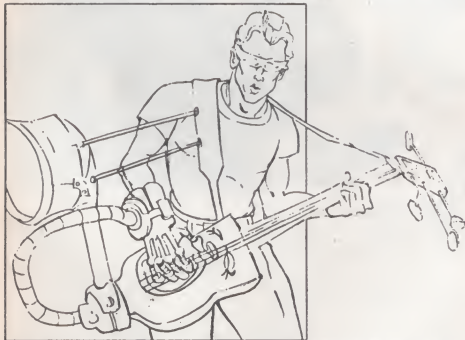
The rider removes the cloak and is revealed to be a beautiful, naked girl with long blonde hair and eyes like Clint Eastwood in a mean mood. After taking a ceremonial swim in a pool she slowly dresses in a costume that consists of little more than black boots and a few leather straps. She takes so long doing this that by the time she reaches the city everyone is dead, thus creating the impression that as far as saviours go this one is not exactly a model of efficiency ("Sorry I missed the massacre, squire. Had trouble with the knots on my leather G-string...") Where would Superman be today if, every time there was an emergency, he took several hours to get into his costume? I ask you!

Of course she redeems herself later on, though first she has to undergo ritual humiliation and torture at the hands of the leader of the baddies, by plunging into the Lochnar itself and destroying it.

The graphics and animation in this episode are undoubtedly very impressive but I found the story itself a little predictable and overlong. And also, thanks to the lack of humour, a little pretentious. I think it was a mistake to end the movie with a long episode devoid of humour but that's only a minor criticism and didn't detract from my overall enjoyment of the film.

I think I can safely say that if you're a science fiction or fantasy fan, an animation freak or simply into 'AA' style sex and violence you're going to like *Heavy Metal*.

Especially if you sit in the front row



Opposite: The giant space ship which makes an appearance in the segment *So Beautiful and So Dangerous*. Opposite inset: The two alien acid-heads who star in the same story. Opposite inset: Captain Stern, from the story of the same name, who finds himself on trial for a huge number of horrendous crimes. Above: One of Howard Chaykin's *Futurock* musicians from the *Tarna* story. Below left: This cartoon was produced by the staff animators in one of their slacker moments. Below right: The prosecutor who appears in the Captain Stern story.



history of AMICUS

In this the first part of a retrospective look at the films of the Amicus production company, excerpted from the forthcoming book *The House That Dripped Blood: A History of Amicus*, Phil Edwards and Alan Jones examine the earliest of the Amicus productions, released between 1954 and 1959.



The word *Amicus* is Latin for *Friend*. In 1954 two New Yorkers came together to form a company that would eventually use this name, their third film under this banner being the landmark horror film in 1964, *Dr Terror's House of Horrors*. They would go on to produce a further twenty films between them before the company dissolved amidst intrigue and suspicion in 1974.

During this period 1964 to 1974, Amicus was the only company to have its own particular brand image as distinctive as its only rival in England, *Hammer Film Productions*. The two men responsible for this unique output were Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky.

Max Rosenberg was born in New York City on September 13, 1914 and was educated there, going on to attend law school. Upon his graduation in 1938, he entered the film industry and during the Second World War, he acquired the American distribution rights to the British film *I Met a Murderer* starring James Mason and Pamela Kelline. He followed this by distributing other low budget foreign-language films in the USA. Further information on Rosenberg in these early years is sketchy. He is a secretive man by nature (our initial letter to him regarding this history received no reply) rarely, if ever granting interviews. His would seem to be a world of financial wheeler-dealing and speculation, specialising in the nebulous areas of small exploitive film distribution and financing.

Milton Subotsky was born in New York City

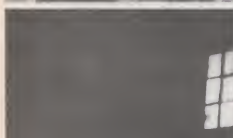
on September 27, 1921, and was educated at Brooklyn Technical High School where he majored in chemistry. From 1937 to 1942 he studied chemical engineering, but showed an interest in the arts and had wanted to make films as a child. His family thought that the film business was somewhat disreputable, so he went to the Cooper Union School of Engineering at night and during the day worked at a job in a film company which he had found by writing to every address in the classifieds of the telephone directory. His job as assistant cameraman really meant that he did everything from loading the camera to carrying the battery pack around. In 1939 the company made a bid for a government film on lathe operating and as Subotsky had studied the subject at school, he was assigned to script it. The bid wasn't accepted but the incident did start him in screenwriting.

In 1940 he became a member of the *American Television Society* which was organised to promote the infant industry. He wrote and acted in several shows for children, although in these early years most of the audience consisted of television engineers monitoring the programmes on tiny three inch screens. In 1942 Subotsky enlisted in the army and wrote technical training films for the Signal Corps. One of the titles he will never forget is *Loading and Unloading Telegraph Poles From Flatcars in Sidings*. He went on to become an editor in the Corps' photographic centre and also became editor of the Fort Dix camp newspaper. Following

demobbing in 1946 he became sales manager for a US film export company and in 1947 joined Billy Rose on his daily syndicated newspaper column, *Pitching Horseshoes*.

In 1949 he formed his own television production and distribution company and wrote many scripts including *Arch Oboler's Lights Out*, *The Kate Smith Hour*, *M.I. Magination*, *The Ken Murray Hour* and *Danger*. He also acquired the rights to several old feature films and westerns and started selling them to television via a mailing list. Some stations would only have half-hour slots to fill, so he re-edited them to twenty-six minute segments. It was a practice in film editing that would prove useful in later years when he would take an active interest in the cutting of the Amicus films.

Subotsky met Rosenberg while he was still at the television company. A group of Harvard students had approached him for the finance to finish a 16mm film called *A Touch of the Times*. Subotsky gave them the money on the understanding that Rosenberg, who had a company called *Classic Pictures*, would distribute the feature. Rosenberg lost interest in that film and dropped out of the agreement. In 1954 Subotsky became involved in a series of television programmes called *Junior Science*, based on the books *After Dinner Science* and *Science Magic* by Kenneth M. Sweezy. Each fifteen minute film explained a single principle of physics in the form of an experiment which children could do at home. Harvey Cort was the director and Subotsky went to the only man he knew to



raise the money for the thirteen episodes and the two shared the profits. *Junior Science* ran for many years in syndication and is today distributed to schools by McGraw Hill, the publishers.

It was then that the two men formed a company that was initially called *Vanguard Productions*. Written contracts were never exchanged, their entire dealings over the years were based on the trust of a handshake.

Rosenberg's main area of operation within the company was that of raising the financial backing for the various properties that Subotsky would option for filming.

Subotsky's interests are eclectic—in his own words, "I really like making any picture that is entertaining". However, his predilection for the macabre and fantastic is self evident if one looks at the main body of *Amicus* films.

He sees them as "Adult Fairy Tales". Rosenberg, although proud of the fact that *Amicus* gave many directors their first chances, once told Subotsky that for all he cared, they (the horror films) could have been a can of sardines. Rosenberg rarely interfered with the creative side of the films unless they were what he considered "serious subjects".

Teenagers, "Baby Baby", reached number four in the British Top Ten. Another Frankie Lyman song from the film, "I'm not a Juvenile Delinquent", was also a minor, if more enduring hit. Dori Grey was played by newcomer Tuesday Weld in her first film performance, although her singing voice was dubbed by Connie Francis.

Reviews of the time pointed out that most of the technical credits were particularly low grade. *Variety* blamed Subotsky and Rosenberg for the poor production quality and the musical direction saying, that the sound recording was unusually bad and that many of the numbers were completely out of sync with the actors. They even took exception to the phoney applause track which was added in a similar way to the many television shows of the time.

"A film which should satisfy all cats, cool and hot" was the way the *Daily Sketch* described *Disc Jockey Jamboree*, known simply in America as *Jamboree*. Unlike *Rock Rock*, *Disc Jockey Jamboree* had a serious plot which was insisted upon by Warner Brothers and concerned the trials and tribulations of the cutthroat music business.



Opposite: Call-girl Francis tells all to her psychiatrist Lloyd Nolan in *Girl of the Night*. Top left: Mickey Rooney as the tough guy on *Death Row* in *The Last Mile*. Below left: One of the inhabitants of *The City of the Dead*. Above: Eleanor Bron and Sandy Dennis in the film version of Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone*, *A Touch of Love*.

such as *Girl of the Night* (1960) and *A Touch of Love* (1968).

The first Vanguard Production was *Rock Rock Rock* (1956). Dori Grey's problems with her father, her boyfriend Tommy and her desire for a new strapless gown for her High School Dance formed the very slim plot premise. Milton Subotsky dusted off an old unsold half-hour tv script he had written with Phyllis Coe to use as the basis for the film, after noting the instant commercial success of the first rock and roll movie *Rock Around the Clock* in 1956. "I saw the review in *Variety* and said to Max, 'Let's make the second rock and roll film. I started listening for five hours a day to rock and roll music and I wrote ten of the twenty songs we used in the film. We did the recording sessions in about three weeks and we had the picture shooting in about four weeks. We had the film shot and edited in sixteen days and had it on the circuit as quickly as possible."

Rock Rock Rock was the first film to use a high percentage of black performers, including Chuck Berry, The Flamingos and Frankie Lyman. One of the songs co-written by Subotsky for Frankie Lyman and the

Subotsky says, "Adding a serious plot like that to a musical can be deadly. I don't think *Jamboree* worked that well because every time a musical number occurred, it fought the story".

Merit seemed to have little to do with the success of these films, although *The Hollywood Reporter* thought the film was superior to the general run of such pictures, noting that the story made sense and commenting that the dialogue of screenwriter Leonard Kantner was fresh and sharp.

"Brutal, degrading and degraded" was how *The Times* described *The Last Mile* (1958). Based on the famous stage play which had starred Clark Gable in Los Angeles and Spencer Tracy on Broadway in 1930. A film version was first made in 1931 with Preston Foster. As Subotsky recalls, "During the days of my television feature film distribution company, I discovered the first film version. It was a hard hitting film about a prison revolt among condemned men on *Death Row* waiting to be dragged down the 'last mile' to the electric chair. I don't think the movie we made, directed by Howard Koch, was as

successful as the original, remakes very seldom are in my opinion. The star was Mickey Rooney who quite frankly was no star at all at this time. He did it solely for the money, he didn't know his lines, he hadn't even read the script! I remember there was this ridiculous press conference that Max set up on the first day of shooting. Rooney said, "This is a great picture—I can't wait to see how it turns out."

The psychological problems faced by a prostitute, based on the book *The Call Girl* by Dr Harold Greenwald, provided the basis for *Girl of the Night* (1960), the first of two Vanguard productions that didn't include a credit for Subotsky, the other being *Lad A Dog*.

Subotsky bought the rights from Greenwald on the stipulation that the film would be a serious study of the subject, the first time a film of this nature would have been presented on the screen without sensationalism. Subotsky wrote the script and then went to England to produce *City of the Dead*. The script was rewritten in his absence by Ted Berkam and Raphael Blau, thereby losing the documentary realism that

style by the editor of *Girl of the Night*, Avram Avakian, with additional scenes handled by Leslie H. Martinson, the film is predictable and syrupy; admittedly, two factors standard for this type of film. "The dogs are quite nice", commented the *Monthly Film Bulletin* at the time.

The last Vanguard film, *The World of Abbott and Costello* (1964) proved an embarrassment to all concerned. This compilation film used extracts from eighteen Abbott and Costello features, including *Buck Privates* (1941), *Mexican Hayride* (1948) and *Abbott and Costello Go To Mars* (1953).

As Subotsky recalls, "I had worked on compilation film before called *Laugh Parade* which had Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Buster Keaton and others in extracts from their films. I thought it would be a good idea to do the same for Abbott and Costello, two comedians I admired very much. Their films were really an excuse to incorporate their famous vaudeville routines into a motion picture. I thought of a way of connecting all the routines I wanted to use with a simple narration about them looking for a job. I wanted to go to New York to edit it but Max



he had wanted instilled into it.

The story as adapted to the screen used a composite of all the case histories in the book distilled into one character, Bobbie Williams, played convincingly by Anne Francis under Joseph Gates' direction. The strong realistic approach achieved by cinematographer Joseph Brun in *The Last Mile*, was used again here but to lesser effect. The film is reminiscent of today's television features in its use of artificial characterisation and relationships, even though the intentions of the film seem earnest enough.

Lad A Dog (1961) was based on the popular children's books by Albert Payton Terhuan, which had been read and admired by Subotsky as a child. He wrote a script that was constant action from beginning to end, but the mawkish weepie that the completed film became was due to Jack Warner's dislike of the script. It was rewritten by Lillie Hayward and Roberta O. Hodes, the latter being the associate producer as she had been on *Girl of the Night*.

Made in California, the film details the love of a crippled eight-year-old girl for a Collie dog named Lad. Directed in an old-fashioned

thought he could handle it and I gave him a list of the routines to use. Unfortunately, he didn't think the pictures were very funny and told me he thought they were repetitious, so he ended up using a load of junk. No scene ran long enough to build their routines and to make it worse, he got a dreadful American comedian, Jack Leonard, to speak Gene Wood's narration."

The World of Abbott and Costello is most notable as a reminder of the depths to which the great horror films of the 30s and 40s were dragged in the early 50s. *Variety*, however, thought the film a winner and was actually looking forward to a sequel.

While *The World of Abbott and Costello* was being edited in New York by Max Rosenberg, Subotsky was in England supervising the production of *Dr Terror's House of Horrors*, their second horror film, but the first to appear under the banner of *Amicus*. The first real "Amicus" film was *Vulcan's City of the Dead* in 1959 which wasn't Milton Subotsky's first brush with the horror genre at all as after *Rock Rock Rock* he had wanted to do a colour remake of *Frankenstein*. "I wrote a script which was very





Opposite page: A series of scenes from the 1959 shocker *City of the Dead* which starred Christopher Lee. Above: Whispering Paul McDowell and the Temperance Seven in It's Dad, Dad! Above right: A scene from *Disc Jockey Jamboree*. Below: Bud Abbott and Lou Costello fool around with waxworks in *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, one of the many routines featured in the Amicus compilation movie *The World of Abbott and Costello*.



close to the original Mary Shelley story and took it to Elliot Hyman at Seven Arts who said, "What do you guys know about horror? You make musicals! I couldn't believe it, after one film we were typecast! He said he would send it to Jimmy Carreras at Hammer Films in London and we wound up getting a payment for originating the idea and a percentage of the profits for *The Curse of Frankenstein*." Michael Carreras has since refuted this but Subotsky has the letter and the original script to prove his point.

City of the Dead was an original story written by Subotsky that George Baxt had adapted as a screenplay. He went to England when Max told him he had done a co-financing deal there, one of the companies involved being Hannah Weinstein's, the company responsible for such television series as *Robin Hood*, *Ivanhoe* and *The Buccaneers*. Subotsky, "She supposedly had a new studio set up so I went to England to find that there really wasn't a deal at all. Also that the studio was closing, that my salary was stopped after only three weeks and that the Baxt script was only 60 minutes long as they thought it was going to be a support film." Subotsky realised that he would have to renegotiate the deal and write an extra twenty minutes of script to make it acceptable as a main feature. He took the story of Nan Barlow (*Venetia Stevenson*) being persuaded by her suspicious history lecturer (*Christopher Lee*) to visit the New England village of Whitewood where she finds herself at the mercy of a witches coven under the auspices of Mrs. Nessless (*Patricia Jessel*), and added a new character. "I added Nan's boyfriend who goes to look for her after her disappearance and I thought it looked seamless in the finished film. It had a classic structure and what is interesting is that we had the heroine killed off halfway through the film and another girl going to look for her who finds herself in the same situation. This was similar to *Psycho*, but we did it first".

The film, shot in black and white and budgeted at £45,000, was the directorial debut of John (Llewellyn) Moxey who has since become a respected director of television fantasy like *The Night Stalker* and



The House that Wouldn't Die. "And I think he did a good job", says Subotsky. This opinion was not reflected at the time; "Something of a horror comic and the witches overact monotonously" said *The Monthly Film Bulletin*. In retrospect however, the film has considerably more effect than most of its contemporary rivals with its taut, sparse direction and eerie artificial atmosphere. It also moves along at a brisk pace and is never boring. The film's prologue showing the burning of Elizabeth Selwyn at the stake, (who in reincarnation is Mrs Nessless), still retains its shock value and echoes Mario Bava's extraordinary *Black Sunday/Revenge of the Vampire*. Interestingly enough this was the film that Subotsky showed to director Roy Ward Baker and art director Tony Curtis when he was trying to show them what effect was after in the ghoul story in his recent production *The Monster Club*. *Castle of Frankenstein* magazine also looked back on it affectionately calling it "An enjoyable British thriller".

One thing that Subotsky emphatically denies is that the film was made to cash in on the then current popularity of the horror

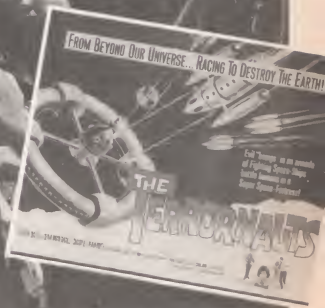
genre. "I certainly didn't see it that way, although it may have been this that prompted the backers to finance it".

The film did very well in the United Kingdom but in the USA Rosenberg couldn't get a distribution deal, "And as a result he didn't trust it. He wound up cutting it by ten minutes and adding 3D sequences from a terrible Canadian film directed by Julian Roffman, (*The Mask—eventually released as Eyes of Hell*)". Eventually however, these sequences were taken out and *Horror Hotel* was released with a campaign that said "Ring for Doom Service". The cut footage was never replaced in the American prints.

Milton Subotsky remained in England after the release of *City of the Dead* and convinced Rosenberg that the production arm of the company should continue to use England as a base primarily because of the lower production costs. This was the beginning of a new style of operation for the two producers. Max stayed in New York rarely visiting England, and then for only short periods of time, the main method of communication between the two men being by letter and telephone conversations.

LA C.E.D. présente

HORROR HOTEL



CASTING BY CHRISTOPHER LEE • BENJAMIN HARRIS
MUSIC BY JEFFREY STEVENSON



THE AMICUS FILMOGRAPHY

CITY OF THE DEAD (US: HORROR HOTEL). Britannia Films/British Lion 1958. Screenplay, George Baxt from a story by Milton Subotsky. Directed by John Moxey. Starring Christopher Lee, Boris St. John, Patricia Jessel.

IT'S TRAD, DAD (US: RING-A-DING RHYTHM). Columbia 1960. Screenplay Milton Subotsky. Directed by Dick Lester. Starring Helen Shapiro, Craig Douglas, Chubby Checker. **JUST FOR FUN.** Columbia 1961. Screenplay Milton Subotsky. Directed by Gordon Fleming. Starring Mark Wynter, Bobby Vee, The Crickets.

DR TERROR'S HOUSE OF HORRORS. Paramount/British Lion 1964. Screenplay Milton Subotsky. Directed by Freddie Francis. Starring Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Donald Sutherland.

THE SKULL. Paramount 1965. Screenplay Milton Subotsky from the story "The Skull of the Marquis de Sade" by Robert Bloch. Directed by Freddie Francis. Starring Peter Cushing, Patrick Wymark, Christopher Lee.

THE DEADLY BEES. Paramount 1965. Screenplay Robert Bloch from the novel "A Taste for Honey" by H.F. Heard. Directed by Freddie Francis. Starring Suzanne Leigh, Frank Finlay, Guy Doleman.

DOCTOR WHO AND THE DALEKS. British Lion 1965. Screenplay Milton Subotsky from the BBC tv serial by Terry Nation. Directed by Gordon Fleming. Starring Peter Cushing, Jenna Linden, Roy Castle.

THE PSYCHOPATH. Paramount 1965. Screenplay Robert Bloch. Directed by Freddie Francis. Starring Patrick Wymark, Margaret Johnson, John Standing.

DALEKS INVASION EARTH, 2164 AD. British Lion 1965. Screenplay Milton Subotsky from the BBC tv serial by Terry Nation. Directed by Gordon Fleming. Starring Peter Cushing, Bernard Cribbins, Ray Brooks.

THE TERRORNAUTS. Avco Embassy 1966. Screenplay John Brunner from the novel "The Walling Asteroid" by Murray Lindsay. Directed by Montgomery Tully. Starring Simon Oates, Stanley Meadows, Zena Marshall.

THEY CAME FROM BEYOND SPACE. Avco Embassy 1966. Screenplay Milton Subotsky from the novel "The Gods Hate

Kansas" by Joseph Millard. Directed by Freddie Francis. Starring Robert Hutton, Jennifer Jayne, Zia Mohyeddin. **TORTURE GARDEN.** Columbia 1966. Screenplay Robert Bloch from four of his short stories. Directed by Freddie Francis. Starring Jack Palance, Burgess Meredith, Peter Cushing.

DANGER ROUTE. United Artists 1967. Screenplay Meade Roberts from the novel "The Eliminator" by Andrew York. Directed by Seth Holt. Starring Richard Johnson, Carol Lynley, Barbara Bouchet.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY. Palomar Pictures International 1968. Screenplay Harold Pinter from his play. Directed by William Friedkin. Starring Robert Shaw, Patrick Magee, Dandy Nichols.

A TOUCH OF LOVE (US: THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH). Columbia/British Lion 1968. Screenplay Margaret Drabble from her novel "The Millstone". Directed by Waris Hussein. Starring Sandy Dennis, Ian McKellen, Michael Coles.

THE MIND OF MISTER SOAMES. Columbia 1968. Screenplay John Hale and Edward Simpson from the novel by Eric Simpson from the novel by Eric Charles Maine. Directed by Alan Cooke. Starring Tarance Stamp, Robert Vaughn, Nigel Davenport.

SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN. AIP 1968. Screenplay Christopher Wickham from the novel "The Disoriented Man" by Peter Saxon. Directed by Gordon Hessler. Starring Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Vincent Price.

THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD. Cinema International 1970. Screenplay Robert Bloch from four of his short stories. Directed by Peter O'Fallon. Starring Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Ingrid Pitt.

L. MONSTER. British Lion 1970. Screenplay Milton Subotsky from "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Louis Stevenson. Directed by Stephen Weeks. Starring Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Milla Raven.

WHAT BECAME OF JACK AND JILL? Palomar Pictures International 1971. Screenplay Roger Marshall from the novel "The Ruthless Ones" by Laurence Moody. Directed by Bill Bain. Starring Vanessa Howard, Mona Washbourne, Paul Nicholas.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT. Metromedia/Cinema 1971. Screenplay Milton Subotsky based on stories from EC Comics published by William M. Gaines. Directed by Freddie Francis. Starring Joan Collins, Peter Cushing, Ralph Richardson.

ASYLUM. Cinema/CIC 1972. Screenplay Robert Bloch from four of his short stories. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. Starring Peter Cushing, Britt Ekland, Herbert Lom.

AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS. Cinema 1972. Screenplay Roger Marshall from the novel "Fangirls" by Roger Case. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. Starring Peter Cushing, Stephenie Beacham, Herbert Lom.

THE VAULT OF HORROR. Metromedia/Cinema 1972. Screenplay Milton Subotsky based on stories by Al Feldstein and William M. Gaines published in EC Comics. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. Starring Dawn Addams, Tom Baker, Michael Craig.

MADHOUSE. AIP 1973. Screenplay Greg Morrison and Ken Levinson from the novel "Devilday" by Angus Hall. Directed by James Clark. Starring Vincent Price, Peter Cushing, Robert Quarry.

FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE. Warner Brothers 1973. Screenplay Robin Clarke and Raymond Christodoulou from four short stories by R. Chatewind-Hayes. Directed by Kevin Connor. Starring Ian Bannen, Ian Carmichael, Peter Cushing.

THE BEAST MUST DIE. British Lion 1973. Screenplay Michael Winder from the story "There shall be no Darkness" by James Blish. Directed by Paul Annett. Starring Calvin Lockhart, Peter Cushing, Charles Gray.

THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT. AIP/British Lion 1974. Screenplay James Cawthorn and Michael Moorcock from the novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Directed by Kevin Connor. Starring Doug McClure, John McNery, Susan Penhaligon.

AT THE EARTH'S CORE. AIP/British Lion 1976. Screenplay Milton Subotsky from the novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Directed by Kevin Connor. Starring Doug McClure, Peter Cushing, Caroline Munro.

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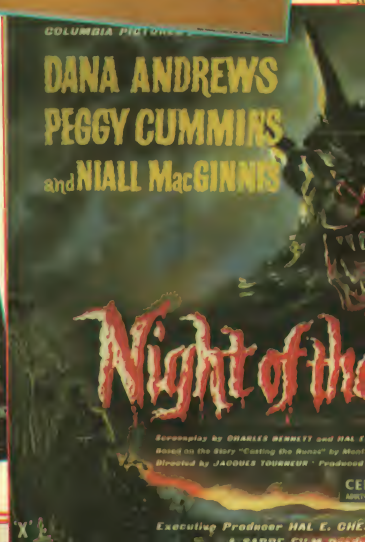
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FAB FIFTIES FILM POSTERS

Left: The original US poster for the 1954, Gordon Douglas directed sf horror *Them!*



1950. The golden years of Hollywood horror were past. With the coming of the Atomic Age, science fiction films became the vogue. What horrors there were were of a radioactive nature. We present the first part of a two part poster gallery on the fantasy films of the fifties. Feature researched by Phil Edwards.





Top row, left to right: Voodoo Island (1957) was one of the poorer horror offerings of the fifties, despite the presence of Boris Karloff. It! The Terror from Beyond Space (1958) was a taut science fiction thriller to which the more recent Alien owes much.

Bottom row, left to right: A delightful example of the poster for the Japanese film. The protagonist is capable of turning into gas and becomes a thief and murderer. The superb British quad for the excellent horror thriller The Night of the Demon. Directed by master of atmosphere Jacques Tourneur, the film starred American actor Dana Andrews. The Belgian poster for 1950 space movie Rocketship XM.



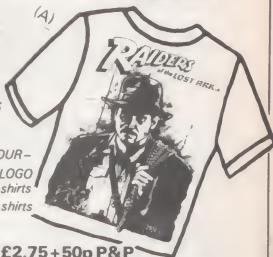


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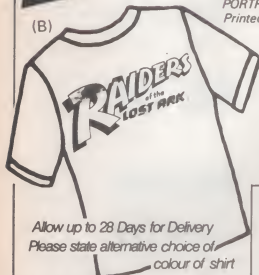
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Yes, I know I reviewed *Superman* a few issues back, but that was an 18-minute condensation. Now comes a superb 50 minute featurette from Portland Films, 45 New Oxford Street, London WC1 at £69.95. There's a lot to be said for these 50 minute features. They're long enough to get the story in, and tight enough never to be boring. The action in *Superman* never lets up.

The film comes on three individual reels, though is bought as a whole. However, you may find some shops selling reels individually. *Part One* features a generous portion of the Krypton sequence, beginning with the trial and sentencing of the three super villains who feature in *Superman II*. The remainder of this reel takes us through Superbaby's journey to Earth, complete with a monologue from Marlon Brando, and the boy's adoption into the Kent family. Here, Jeff East gets a chance to show his talents as the young Clark Kent who is frustrated at having his super powers but unable to reveal them, except by racing an express train. *Part One* ends with the emergence of the Fortress of Solitude and Superman's first flying shot. The audience I showed this to in a large hall applauded at the first glimpse of Supie in his red tights and blue pants taking off!

Part Two takes us through the establishing sequences of *Superman*. Such as his rescue of the helicopter, his capture of a whole boat-load of villains and his growing relationship with Lois Lane. There is also humour when Clark Kent faints there he and Lois are mugged. But he does manage to secretly catch the bullet fired at Lois.

The story doesn't really take off until the final reel when Superman averts the destruction of America's West Coast and brings Lois back to life by turning time back when she is crushed in an earthquake.

Don't feel too despondent if you've already rushed out and bought the shorter version.

There are many scenes in the *digest* which are not included in this longer version which can be neatly edited in to make something like one hour's running time, complete with a caption promising "Next year, *Superman II*."

The print and colour definition are excellent, as is the sound. The proof of the pudding was in showing the film on a large screen, as I did, on which a 16mm film had also been presented. The audience didn't know the difference which shows that Super 8 has a versatility to it that is too often underrated.

It never ceases to amaze me how the editing down of a full feature film into *digest* form can turn a mediocre movie into an entertaining short. Such is the case with *Saturn 3*, distributed by Walton Films, 87 Richford Street, London W7, with the price varying around £30 according to individual stores.

It runs for 18 minutes, and with a plot as simple as it is, that's really all it takes to make the message clear. It's not a film to produce great performances. The most I can remember about Farrah Fawcett is her smile while Kirk Douglas struts out his dimpled chin valiantly at every opportunity. It's Hector, the robot, who steals the glory and who gives us the film's best shock moments, such as when he slices off Harvey Keitel's hand and then borrows his head.

The effects are certainly impressive but it's John Barry's sets that remain the most vivid of the film's visual aspects. It's a film that should have a niche in every sf movie collector's home cinema.

If you've grown bored with the cheaper and far less enthralling instalment of *Buck Rogers* on the box recently, I recommend you take a good dose of the pilot, or the cinema release version, whichever way you look at it.

Buck Rogers runs for about thirty four minutes and is available from Derann Film

Services Ltd., 99 High Street, Dudley, West Midlands at £57.95.

Gil Gerard makes a handsome enough Buck Rogers although he does tend to look like many of today's tv stars. You know, sort of a cross between Lee Majors and you-mention-him. He is assisted by the inevitable robot and the gorgeous Erin Gray as Commander Wilma Deering. There's another tasty bird in the shape of Pamela Hensley as the naughty Princess Ardala. Her sinister assistant is played by veteran screen villain Henry Silva. Unlike the tv series, this movie features an abundance of special effects and outer-space battles. I know we've seen it all before, with space ships firing lasers left, right and centre, but it still beats what we get on telly.

If you prefer something with a little more guts to it, may I suggest John Frankenheimer's *Prophesy*, a 50-minute feature from Derann at £85.95

It's all about going down to the woods and finding more than a teddy bear's picnic, as Robert Foxworth and Talia Shire discover when they go studying forest environments. They stumble across several horrible mutations, like a tadpole the size of a salmon, and a mutated baby of some kind. Clever old Foxworth finds that the cause of these mutations is the mercury that is used in a nearby pulp mill which has polluted the local lake.

Things get hairy when a family out camping is attacked by a bear-like creature which later turns on Foxworth and his expedition, resulting in a sickening climax. All good stuff in excellent colour with a masked-off print to give a wide-screen shape. There is also a gory 17-minute extract available at £30.95 which concentrates on the film's nastiest moments. Just the film to round off the evening with!

it's only a movie

It's been interesting to watch how *For Your Eyes Only* has been doing at the box office compared with *Raiders of the Lost Ark* which, as I said in my review of the film back in issue 37, owes a lot to the Bond series (and another critic described *Raiders* as "a Bond movie on speed"). In America, old Indiana Jones has run circles round Bond, having grossed at least three times as much money at the time of writing (I don't have the exact figures to hand) and making it pretty obvious that American audiences are beginning to lose their traditional enthusiasm for 007.

In England the situation is different in that, to begin with, *For Your Eyes Only* was the clear winner at the box office but as the months have gone by *Raiders* has proved it's got the better 'legs' of the two maintaining a high position on *Screen International's* weekly Top Ten Films list while the Bond movie slid downwards. I think the reason for *Raiders'* continued popularity is a growing word-of-mouth about the movie (its initial publicity campaign is poorly handled, I felt, and the trailer for it was appalling—it failed to capture the unique *feel* of the movie) while on the other hand *For Your Eyes Only* has failed to create a similar momentum of popularity. For example, hands up all of you who have seen *Raiders* more than once? Right, now who has been back to see the Bond movie for a second or third time? Yes, just as I thought.

For Your Eyes Only is by no means a flop. It's done very well in several countries, apart from England, and even in America it did okay. But the problem is that these days doing 'okay' in the American market, which remains the important one, is not good enough for a movie that costs as much as the Bonds do. It was the American reaction to *Moonraker* that led to Broccoli to try to rejuvenate the series by taking a different approach with *For Your Eyes Only* and I'm curious to see what he does with the next one, *Octopussy*. Will the so-called 'tough' approach be maintained, will there be a reversion back to the style of *The Spy Who Loved Me* and *Moonraker* (plus a return to the usual plot), or will Broccoli decide to try and beat the Lucas/Spielberg mob at their own game (just as they beat him at his)? Will the next Bond bear a striking resemblance to *Raiders* in style? (And will Roger Moore turn up at some point wielding a bull-whip?) I wouldn't mind betting that it will (and he does).

The Bond series could certainly do with something to beef it up. Despite the breath-taking stuntwork in *For Your Eyes Only* the overall impression was one of tiredness. Compared to *Raiders* it seemed a creaky and old-fashioned movie. Where the Bonds once set the pace for the commercial film industry they have now been left far behind by the new breed of action movies. They are no longer innovative, they are merely expensive copies of older Bond movies with each action set-piece inspired by an earlier one (can you think of anything in *For Your Eyes Only* that didn't remind you of something you'd seen in a previous Bond?).

The Bonds need an injection of new ideas accompanied by a fresh approach to the character of Bond himself (the 'new' approach in *For Your Eyes Only* was anything but fresh). One thing is for certain—looking for either ideas or originality in John



Gardner's James Bond novel *Licence Renewed* is a waste of time. As an attempt to continue the line of books by updating Fleming's Bond and bringing him into the 1980s it's a crashing disappointment, from the bland Richard Chopping cover through to the contrived plot and weak climax. It's a lifeless piece of work but why should one expect otherwise? The James Bond novels written by Fleming remain interesting because they were written by someone who had an emotional involvement with what he was writing. Even the worst of the books, written when Fleming was tired of the whole thing, contain a great deal of Fleming himself and it's this obsessive quality that lifts them out of the realm of hackwork and into the category of low art. *Licence Renewed*, however, is a hack novel. A high-class hack novel but a hack novel nonetheless.

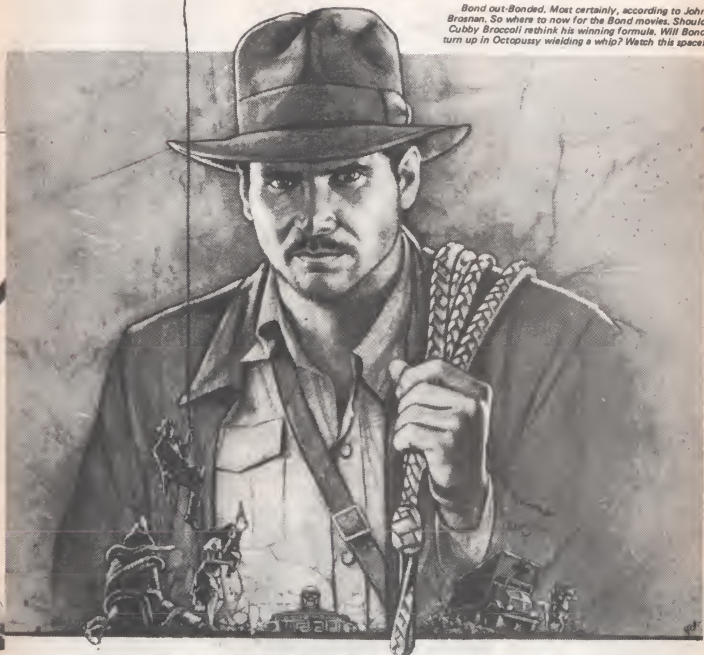
It's not even a particularly competent hack novel. Gardner makes an incredibly huge

technical error that shows that his grasp of the subject he's writing about—nuclear power stations—is somewhat shaky, to say the least. His villain, Dr Anton Murik (a funny little man with the movements and gestures of "a grounded bird") plans to sabotage six nuclear power stations unless he is paid a huge ransom—a reasonable enough plot device but then Gardner goes on to explain what will happen when a reactor goes wild: "The core itself would become so hot that nothing could stop it, right through the Earth—rock, earth, metal—nothing could stand in its way. Right through to China, Mr Bond..."

Surely he's joking, you think, but further on Mr Gardner, via Dr Murik, gives another lecture on the subject: "The core of the reactor will proceed to burn its way through the earth. Eventually the core will find an exit point (my *italics*) where further, possibly more devastating, radioactive material will

starring John Brosnan

Bond out-Bonded. Most certainly, according to John Brosnan. So where to now for the Bond movies. Should Cubby Broccoli rethink his winning formula. Will Bond turn up in Octopussy wielding a whip? Watch this space!



be expelled. That is known, to those who have not heard of it, as the China Syndrome!

Good grief! I cried when I read the above paragraph and realized that Gardner has taken the term 'China Syndrome' literally. He actually believes that a runaway nuclear core would burn its way all the way down to the molten centre of the world and then defy gravity by *burning its way up the other side!* Frankly I find it rather mind-boggling that anyone could be so ignorant about such basic scientific knowledge in this day and age but you'd at least expect a writer who is being paid a large amount of money to write a book to go to the trouble of making sure he understands the scientific terms he is using in his story. It's the sort of blunder that would have horrified Fleming himself who was always meticulous about the research he did for his novels.

By the way, there have been rumours that *License Renewed* will be filmed after

Octopussy and that Sean Connery will be lured back to the part of Bond seeing as much of the story is set in Scotland, but I doubt if this will happen. Apart from the story being a bit feeble for a Bond movie, in my opinion, Connery will be getting rather long in the tooth by the time they get around to making it. Personally I wouldn't be surprised if *Octopussy* turns out to be the last Bond movie in the series—or at least the last one for a number of years.

I'm not a great fan of the films of Michael Winner but I must admit I was entertained by a piece he wrote in the *London Standard* recently describing how he spends a typical weekend. The most amusing bit was this one: "I find quite a few weekends are taken up because suddenly the phone will ring, and someone has come over from America. It will be Robert Mitchum, or Brando, or Charles Bronson saying: 'I've arrived,' which is very

nice and I take them out." What a lovely image that conjures up—Winner at his local Indian restaurant with Mitchum, Brando and Bronson who have all turned unexpectedly on the same weekend—the three super stars glowering at each other through hooded eyes while Winner chirps happily on in his inimitable manner.

Winner also gave an interesting insight into his working methods: "There is always something to do like screen writing or gardening..." This explains movies he's made like *The Sentinel* which I finally caught up with recently. It had all the earmarks of something that had been dug up out of *somebody's garden*.

Actually that gives me an idea for a movie—there is Michael Winner out in his garden when suddenly there's a rumbling sound and out pops one of John Gardner's high-speed runaway nuclear reactors on its way to China...

book world

New British sf writers are too few and too far between these days. It's hard to know why—certainly the Americans continue to produce new discoveries at a rate of knots, even if some of them are writers one would prefer to have been left undiscovered! Part of the reason may be the lack of short-story magazines, where new writers can develop their skills before moving on to tackle a novel (in which case new magazines such as the one mentioned in my last column will be doubly welcome). Part of it may be the decline of the British empire, or the weather. Who knows?

Be that as it may, there are new talents around, such as Christopher Evans, whose second novel *The Insider* (Faber, £6.95) has just been published. Evans is a young Welsh writer (and should not be confused with the writer and broadcaster Dr Christopher Evans who died last year), whose debut, *Capella's Golden Eyes*, was a well-received portrayal of life on a distant colony world. In his second novel he stays closer to home. *The Insider* is set in Britain a few years in the future, and is about a man whose mind is taken over by an alien intruder.

The alien in question crash-landed in London during the Blitz and was fatally injured, but managed to possess the body of a fourteen-year-old boy, George Blair. As Blair it lived out the next fifty years, aware of its alien origins but lacking most of its original memories, which were lost in the process of takeover. The alien Blair becomes a solitary writer, avoiding as far as possible contact with other people; he can not reconcile himself to being part of the human race. Then Blair has a fatal heart attack, and the transference takes place again: the alien takes over the mind of the only human close to hand, Stephen Marsh, a successful management consultant in early middle age and—more importantly—a gregarious family

man. For the first time it is forced to deal at close emotional quarters with other humans, and the body of the novel deals with its groping attempts to come to terms with being a member of the human race.

All this takes place against the background of a Britain a decade or so hence, sliding further into decline and into the grip of an unpleasantly authoritarian National Front-like right-wing government. This is hardly ever in the forefront of the story, but it's well-realized and convincing.

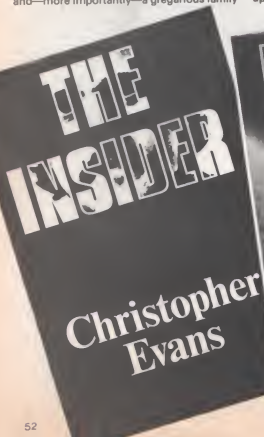
As for the novel itself: it's smoothly written and readable, with convincingly presented characters. My only real complaint with it lies, oddly enough, with its science fiction idea. Alien invaders taking over human bodies are a bit old hat. Admittedly there are differences here: it's a solitary alien intent only on self-preservation, and the process of transfer involves leaving behind most of the memories of its previous life, so that though it's aware of being non-human it can't remember the details. But when it comes down to it, I don't think Christopher Evans is particularly convinced by or interested in this kind of stuff. His main concern is with creating a character suddenly alienated from the previously secure facts of his existence—Marsh's family and friends become strangers to him after the takeover, and he becomes equally strange to them. Their conclusion is that he's having some kind of mental breakdown, and after a while the alien Marsh isn't so sure that they aren't right. What if he's dreamed up all this stuff about an alien past, and half a century in George Blair's body? What he thinks of as objective proof of his Blair-existence turns out to be far from unassailable.

This kind of ambiguity is, to me, a much more fruitful subject for exploration, and in a sense a much purer science-fictional approach to the subject, because if you really

were an alien in another body, with nothing but rather vague memories to prove this to you, there clearly *would* be some doubt as to which set of memories were the real ones; thus it's true to the implications of the idea. Unfortunately, though, *The Insider* starts off much too unambiguously, and these doubts only creep in towards the end of the book. For all that, it's an interesting piece of work, and gets Christopher Evans over the novelist's traditional greatest difficulty: that of producing a worthwhile second novel which isn't just a retread of the first. I look forward to his third with interest.

A few years ago the Science Fiction Writers of America polled their members to find their all-time favourite sf stories and issued the results in three fat anthologies under the general title of the *Science Fiction Hall of Fame*. They were solid, enjoyable, if generally conservative selections, and still comprise a pretty good introduction to traditional middle-of-the-road sf. Now a fourth volume has been published (Gollancz, £8.95), edited by Arthur C. Clarke and containing all the short stories, novelettes and novellas which won Nebula Awards in the years 1965-69. A fifth and sixth volume can doubtless be expected in due course.

Clarke's job as editor can hardly have been



onerous, since there was no choice about what stories to include. He was doubtless asked to do it because his name would help sell the book. Fair enough, but he also provides a three-page introduction which I could have done without. He manages to tell us that he once nearly won an Oscar; that he has won three Nebula Awards; that he resigned from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; and that all the authors are his chums. Small wonder his nickname used to be Ego!

The stories themselves... well, there are 16 in all, by 13 writers (Samuel Delany, Harlan Ellison and Roger Zelazny have two each—a pretty accurate reflection of Where It Was supposed to be At in American sf in the late 1960s). Not many of them would have been my personal choice for the best of their year, but there's some good stuff here: Zelazny's "He Who Shapes", which he later expanded into the novel *The Dream Master*, but which I prefer in this shorter, tighter version; Leiber's "Gonna Roll The Bones," a classic fantasy about a man playing dice with the Devil; Moorcock's "Behold The Man," to which the same remarks apply as for the Zelazny; Silverberg's brilliantly concise horror-sf short story "Passengers," which is about people whose bodies are taken over by aliens but is

otherwise totally dissimilar to Christopher Evan's novel. There's a nice H.G. Wells pastiche by Brian Aldiss; Harlan Ellison's later-to-be-a-movie "A Boy and his Dog" (also his hugely over-rated "Repent Harlequin! Said the Ticktockman"); two stories by Samuel Delany that I've always found unreadable; and lots more. Two exemplify for me the worst in sf: Gordon Dickson's "Call Him Lord," which tells us that if you're a coward you deserve to be killed, and Anne McCaffrey's romantic (in the worst sense) "Dragonrider," which became part of her first Dragon novel and helped launch science fiction into a long slide towards sentimental, whimsical fantasy. But that's just my opinion: millions of readers love them. With 672 pages this is a good fat anthology, and probably 1981's best Christmas present for the up-and-coming sf fan.

Another good buy is James Blish's *Cities in Flight* (Arrow, £2.50) an omnibus edition of four Blish novels previously only available separately. Good, sweeping, galactic stuff this, the central invention being a device which enables you to fly whole terrestrial cities off into space. It climaxes with the end of the Universe. This is Arrow's second Blish omnibus of recent months, and earns them

another bonus mark.

The second volume of Gene Wolfe's "Book of the New Sun" tetralogy is now available here: *The Claw of the Conciliator* (Siddhick & Jackson, £7.95). As I've said before, much as I admire Wolfe I haven't yet taken to this admittedly well-written fantasy epic. This second part seems rather static, and I suspect one will have to wait until the entire work is published to see what Wolfe is up to. I still have hopes that he will pull off something remarkable, but I'd advise you to wait for the paperback to see.

Yet more news of great wads of money finding their way into the pockets of various authors. Frank Herbert has apparently signed up to do a fifth *Dune* novel (wouldn't you know it?), at a staggering reported advance of one-and-a-half million dollars for North American rights only. (These huge advances are generally from publishers buying world rights and hoping to recoup much of the outlay from overseas sales.) Also up in the seven figure league (I can remember the days not so long ago when a five-figure advance for an sf or fantasy novel was considered pretty hot stuff!) is a collaboration between Stephen King and Peter (Ghost Story) Straub. It's entitled *The Talisman*, and is described as "an epic quest fantasy-horror tale full of adventure, the supernatural and the contemporary American landscape." The exact figure paid for it hasn't been revealed, but it's somewhere between one and two million dollars. The idea apparently came from a dream of King's... I really must start to keep a notebook by the side of my bed!

This information, like much of the news in this column, comes from the American sf news magazine *Locus*. If you want to keep up with what's happening in the sf world, this is the magazine to get. It's a monthly, and subscriptions cost £1.00 a year seasmal or £16.00 a year airmail, from Fantast (Medway) Ltd, 39 West Street, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 2LX.

55
The Claw of
the Conciliator

The Claw of the Conciliator

GENE WOLFE

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ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

Science Fiction and Fantasy Games now have a cult following on both sides of the Atlantic. In this feature Steve Jackson explains why they have become so popular.

Some seven years ago, in a small town in the American mid-West, two gamers were putting together a game which was to create a whole new hobby around itself; a hobby which has become the most rapidly-expanding hobby in the US and which grosses over \$25,000,000 a year.

This hobby has not yet decided on a name for itself. In Britain such games are "Fantasy Games" or "Role-Playing Games". In the States, supposedly so as to make them more acceptable to a family market, they are known as "Adventure Games". In fact all these are appropriate descriptions. The games are almost all based on Fantasy or Science Fiction themes. In them players take on the roles of the characters they play. They embark on adventures as individual characters.

If all that doesn't sound particularly remarkable and you are still wondering why all the fuss let me elaborate to say that these games are not competitive, but co-operative. There are no winners or losers. There is no board—in fact all equipment is really only an optional extra. Nor is there an end to the games—they are all played as a series of adventures which all interlink. Finally, new players need know nothing about the rules to begin playing, although the rules themselves can be many pages long!

The original fantasy role-playing adventure game is *Dungeons & Dragons* invented by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson in 1974. As the original it is the best-known and the best seller although many more experienced gamers now prefer games such as *Traveller*, *RunesQuest* and *Tunnels & Trolls* respectively as 'Science Fiction', 'More Coherent' and 'Simpler' variations on the role-playing theme.

In fact, *Traveller* and *RunesQuest* are now following hot on the heels of *Dungeons & Dragons* (known as D&D to its aficionados) in Britain perhaps even more so than in the US, both now being printed in England. I will review only outlines of these games.

The games mentioned above are all different but are similar to each other in the same sort of way that *Cluedo* and *Careers* are similar to *Monopoly*. This similarity is the role-playing concept.

In all role-playing games, a GamesMaster is necessary. The GamesMaster (or GM) must design the world, be it dungeon or starship, that the other players will adventure in. He is a sort of 'God' in his own game-world. I will continue by describing, for convenience, a fantasy role-playing game which could be *Dungeons & Dragons*, *RunesQuest* or *Tunnels & Trolls*. *Traveller*, a science fiction role-playing game ('role-playing game' is usually shorted to RPG) would run in the same sort of way but for 'dungeon' you would read 'planet' and for 'monster' read 'alien'. *Traveller* characters are not of course Wizards and Fighters, but are Interplanetary Explorers, Merchants and Generals.

In a Fantasy RPG, the GM begins by designing a dungeon in secret. This dungeon will be, at its simplest, a series of rooms connected by passages. These are drawn out on his dungeon's plan. Using a convenient key method, the GM indicates which rooms contain treasure (gold coins or magic items) and which contain monsters, which usually guard the treasure. He can also use his own imagination to position traps, puzzles, secret passages or even idiosyncratic artifacts around the dungeon.

If this sounds like hard work, there are dozens of pre-designed dungeons available for sale these days but whether the dungeon is original or purchased, this will be the game "world" that the other players explore. The players never see the dungeon but must explore 'blind' in an attempt to seek out the treasure.

As the GM turns up at a session with his dungeon

hidden away in his folder, the other players start to "roll up characters". By throwing dice, scores are obtained for characteristics such as "Strength" "Intelligence", "Constitution" etc. and thus a Personality Profile of each player's game-character emerges. Some characters will be strong but exceedingly dim whilst others will be strong and smart but may have a low charisma and will thus be unpopular with their fellow characters.

Players then opt to become either Wizards (who can use magic) Heroes (Good Fighters), Clerics (a bit of both) or Thieves in the adventuring party and the adventure can begin.

The GM unfurls his maps and the players prepare for their adventure as he describes their situation:

GM: "You are walking through a forest in search of the Great Black Tree of Kob which you believe guards the entrance to the Hobgoblin Stockade. You see a large dead tree, obviously struck by lightning some time ago, in the centre of a clearing in front of you. What do you want to do?"

The players will have a little conference amongst themselves and then the spokesman may say:

WIZARD: "We approach the tree and look around the base."

GM: (Checks his maps and notes the entrance is through the hollow trunk). "You see nothing unusual."

THIEF: "I climb the tree."

GM: "Looking down you can see the trunk is hollow."

Whereupon the party gets excited. The Fighter will probably lower himself down the trunk by tying a rope to the top branches to be followed by the party. They will find themselves in a dungeon passage. They look in all directions and the GM tells them what they can see. From this they explore the passages until they come across a door.

GM: "The door is a solid wooden door with the inscription 'KEEP OUT' carved on it."

FIGHTER: "I charge the door."

DM: (Shakes dice to determine whether it opens

or not—it does.) "You burst through the door into a 12' square room. In the far left corner is a wooden box. Standing over it is a man-sized creature wraddling in rotting linen. It is advancing menacingly towards you."

The party decides to fight the Mummy they have encountered. Battles are decided by rolling dice, but bonuses are given for a character's strength and the type of weapon and armour he is using. They defeat the Mummy and open the box to find 200 gold coins although the Wizard is seriously injured.

At the next door they unknowingly enter a magic room. On entering, a darkness fills the room and clears some seconds later. Upon leaving they notice that they have just left a Transportation Chamber and that they are now lost in the underground catacombs.

The GM, of course, knows exactly where they are but, as they cannot see his maps, they must find their own way out by exploring only, keeping their own mapping notes as they go. Eventually they will either find their own way out or die in the attempt. If they do find their way out they will call it quits for that evening's play but can use the same characters to enter the same dungeon next week. However, their characters will now be richer and more powerful.

Traveller is a game similar in concept but set in a science fiction world. Adventures from *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *Alien*, *Doctor Who*, etc. can all be put together using the *Traveller* rules. Coupled with this, *Traveller* is less expensive than other RPGs, the basic set costing £5.95.

RunesQuest appeared after D & D and attempted to be more of a complete fantasy world, a product of the fertile imagination of Greg Stafford, the game's motivating forces and a unique personality in the games world. *RunesQuest* players feel much more a part of a "real" Fantasy world in this game, whereas D & D is comparatively unstructured.

Tunnels & Trolls is an inexpensive Fantasy RPG which, in spite of its many critics, is popular for its simpler playing system and its solo dungeons—these are adventures that can be played on one's own





TRAVELLER



through a 'programmed' book.

Not all so-called "Hobby Games" are role-playing games. The hobby comprises games of all sorts from complicated table-top games played with hundreds of hand-painted miniatures through strategic board games to introductory games which are no more complicated than Monopoly.

In future articles I will cover all these games, starting next month with *Traveller*, the best-selling science Fiction role-playing game.

For readers interested in further information, an "Introduction to Hobby Games" Leaflet is available free of charge. Please send a stamped, addressed envelope to: Games Workshop, 27-29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10 (01-965-3713).

Above: A selection of the role-playing games covered in this feature. We'll be interested to hear whether readers would like to see more articles on this subject. Why not drop us a line?

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TV ZONE

WILLIAM DOZIER is probably the man most responsible for the surge of "camp" tv shows during the mid-1960s, with the advent of *Batman* via the ABC-tv network in January, 1966.

The overnight success of the twice-weekly *Batman* show led Dozier, with his own Greenaway Productions (in association with 20th Century-Fox TV), to revive the popular *Green Hornet* radio show of the '30s & '40s.

The *Green Hornet* tv show was changed and updated from the original radio format, created by George W. Trendle, with hero Britt Reid (crusading editor and publisher of "The Daily Sentinel") now zipping about in a souped-up '66 Chrysler Imperial and battling organized crime.

A curious side-note is that within its own mythology Britt Reid was introduced on the radio show as the son of Dan Reid, the Lone Ranger's nephew. I guess it's the only way to go if your uncle was a masked crime fighter!

William Dozier's career took him from law student at USC to a motion picture agency (representing such illustrious names as Erle Stanley Gardner, James Hilton, F. Scott Fitzgerald, etc) to Paramount Studios, as head of the story and writer department. From Paramount he went to RKO as executive assistant to the head of production during the period when such outstanding dramas as *Notorious*, *The Spiral Staircase* and *Murder My Sweet* were being made.

In the early '50s, Dozier went to CBS in New York as executive producer of dramatic programmes, where he supervised production of *Studio One*, *Danger and Suspense*, before becoming head of Hollywood programming for the early days of *Rawhide*, *Gunsmoke*, *Twilight Zone* and *Have Gun—Will Travel*.

In 1959 he shifted over to Columbia Pictures as vice-president in charge of production for Columbia's tv subsidiary, Screen Gems. Under this aegis Dozier produced such small-screen favourites as *Bewitched*, *Donna Reed Show* and *The Farmer's Daughter*. He left Screen Gems in

1964 ("I got tired of running big organizations for other people, and decided to run a small one for myself.") and formed Greenway Productions in partnership with 20th Century-Fox Television. *Batman* and *The Green Hornet* followed.

Listed below are all 26 episodes of *The Green Hornet* tv series; shot in colour and filling a "half-hour" slot. The show's theme, played by Al Hirt, was an updated arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Flight of the Bumble Bee."



THE SILENT GUN (Orig US tv Sept 9 '66)
d. Leslie H. Martinson. wr. Ken Pettus. cast: Van Williams (as Britt Reid), Bruce Lee (as Kato), Lloyd Gough (as Mike Axford), Wendie Wagner (as Casey), Walter Brooke (as D.A. Scanlon); Lloyd Bochner, Charles Francisco, Henry Evans. The *Green Hornet* goes after a deadly silent gun before a crime wave can get started.

GIVE 'EM ENOUGH ROPE (Sept 16)
d. Seymour Robbie. wr. Gwen Bagni & Paul Dubov. cast: regulars; David Renard, Joe Sirola, Mort Mills. The *Green Hornet* and Kato crack a phony accident ring.

PROGRAMMED FOR DEATH (Sept 23)
d. Larry Pearce. wr. Jerry Thomas. from story by Lewis Reed. cast: regulars; Richard Cutting, Signe Hasso, John Alver. The *Green Hornet* and Kato bring about the capture of a ring of phony diamond merchants who have caused the death of one of Britt Reid's reporters.

CRIME WAVE (Sept 20)
d. Larry Pearce. wr. Sheldon Stark. cast: regulars; Peter Haskell, Sheila Wells, Danny

Costello. The *Green Hornet* cracks a computer crime wave that has implicated him as its leader.

THE FROG IS A DEADLY WEAPON (Oct 7)
d. Les Martinson. wr. William L. Stuart. cast: regulars; Thordis Brandt, Victor Jory, Barbara Babcock. The *Green Hornet* uncovers a missing hood who has killed and assumed the identity of a wealthy financier.

EAT, DRINK, AND BE DEAD (Oct 14)
d. Murray Golden. wr. Richard Landau. cast: regulars; Jason Evers, Harry Lauter, Eddie Ness. The *Green Hornet* literally blows a bootleg liquor racket.

BEAUTIFUL DREAMER Pt. 1 (Oct 21)
d. Allen Reisner. wr. Lorenzo Semple Jr & Ken Pettus. cast: regulars; Geoffrey Horne, Henry Hunter, Barbara Gates, Maurice Manson. The *Green Hornet* discovers that a well-known health club owner is brainwashing his clients for criminal purposes.

BEAUTIFUL DREAMER Pt. 2 (Oct 28)
d. Allen Reisner. wr. Lorenzo Semple Jr & Ken Pettus. cast: regulars; as above. The *Green*

Hornet traps the brainwashing health club owner in his own subliminal suggestion gimmick.

THE RAY IS FOR KILLING (Nov 11)
d. Norman Foster. wr. Charles Hoffman & Ken Pettus. cast: regulars; Robert McQueeney, Grant Woods, Mike Mahoney. The *Green Hornet* foils a million dollar art heist.

THE PRAYING MANTIS (Nov 18)
d. Norman Foster. wr. Charles Hoffman & Ken Pettus. cast: regulars; Mako, Allen Jung, Tom Drake. A notorious racketeer turns a Chinatown Tong against the city and the *Green Hornet* in his attempt to extort from nightclub owners.

THE HUNTERS AND THE HUNTED (Nov 25)
d. William Beaudine. wr. Jerry Thomas. cast: regulars; Charles Bateman, Robert Strauss, Douglas Evans. A local club of big-game hunters make the City's racket bosses their prey, intending to crown their hunt with the shooting of the *Green Hornet*.

DEADLINE FOR DEATH (Dec 2)
d. Seymour Robbie. wr. Ken Pettus. cast:

BY TISE VAHIMAGI

regulars; James Best, Lynda Day, Roy Clark. The Green Hornet clears Mike Axford of a murder charge.

THE SECRET OF THE SALLY BELL (Dec 9)
d. Robert Friend. wr. William L. Stuart. cast: regulars; Warren Kemmerling, Beth Brickell, Jacques Denbeaux. The Green Hornet smashes a dope ring and wins the admiration of a pretty female doctor.

FREEWAY TO DEATH (Dec 16)
d. Allen Reisner. wr. Ken Pettus. cast: regulars; Jeffrey Hunter, John Hubbard, David Fresco. Mike Axford becomes a reluctant ally of the Green Hornet in a campaign to break a construction company insurance racket.

MAY THE BEST MAN LOSE (Dec 23)
d. Allen Reisner. wr. Judith & Robert Guy Barrows. cast: regulars; Harold Gould, Robert Hoy, Troy Melton. The Green Hornet risks capture while trying to uncover the District Attorney's would-be assassin.

THE FIREFLY (Jan 6 '87)
d. Allen Reisner. wr. William L. Stuart. cast: regulars; Gerald S. O'Loughlin, Buff Brady, Russ Conway. The Green Hornet battles a vicious arsonist who seeks to destroy the city's life-line and Mike Axford in the process.

CORPSE OF THE YEAR Pt. 1 (Jan 13)
d. James Komack. wr. Ken Pettus. cast:

regulars; Joanne Dru, Tom Simcox, Cesare Donova. Britt Reid is startled by the attack on his Daily Sentinel by an imposter Green Hornet using a twin of the rocket-firing Black Beauty automobile.

CORPSE OF THE YEAR Pt. 2 (Jan 20)
d. James Komack. wr. Ken Pettus. cast: regulars; as above. The Hornet's trap for the imposter pits Black Beauty against a twin Black Beauty.

ACE IN THE HOLE (Feb 3)
d. William Beaudine. wr. J.E. Selby & Stanley H. Silverman. cast: regulars; Richard Anderson, Richard X. Slattery, Bill Couch. By pitting one member against another, the Green Hornet smashes a dangerous criminal cartel.

BAD BET ON A 459-SILENT (Feb 10)
d. Seymour Robbie. wr. Judith & Robert Guy Barrows. cast: regulars; Bert Freed, Brian Avery, Barry Ford. While exposing crooked cops, the Green Hornet is wounded by police, and nearly killed by Mike Axford.

TROUBLE FOR PRINCE CHARMING (Feb 17)
d. unknown wr. Ken Pettus. cast: regulars; Edmund Hashim, Susan Flannery, Alberto Morin. The Green Hornet becomes involved in a plot to oust the young Prince of a foreign power.

ALIAS "THE SCARF" (Feb 24)
d. Allen Reisner. wr. William L. Stuart. cast:

regulars; John Carradine, Paul Gleason, Patricia Barry, Ian Wolfe. In a wax museum caper, the Green Hornet and Kato trap a stregler who's been immortalized in wax.

HORNET, SAVE THYSELF (Mar 3)
d. Seymour Robbie. wr. Don Tait. cast: regulars; Michael Strong, Mervin Brody, Ken Strange. A gun that seemingly shoots of itself comes near putting Britt Reid in prison for murder.

INVASION FROM OUTER SPACE Pt. 1 (Mar 10)
d. E. Derrell Hellenbeck. wr. Art Weingarten. cast: regulars; Larry D. Mann, Linda Gaye Scott, Arthur Batanides, Christopher Dark. The Green Hornet attempts to thwart the plans of a power-mad scientist to steal a nuclear warhead.

INVASION FROM OUTER SPACE Pt. 2 (Mar 17)
d. E. Derrell Hellenbeck. wr. Art Weingarten. cast: regulars; as above. The Green Hornet escapes certain death and prevents the detonation of the H-bomb warhead.

SEEK, STALK & DESTROY (this episode was only later seen via syndication) d. George Weggner. wr. Jerry Thomas. cast: regulars; Paul Carr, Harvey Perry, E.J. Andre, Ralph Meeker, Raymond St. Jacques. Three Korean War veterans plot to spring their former commander, wrongfully accused of murder, from prison.



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david giler

A Starburst Interview by Tony Crawley

The *Alien* debate—forever fed by rumours of an *Alien II*—goes on. Why was Dan O'Bannon's original script messed about with? How come certain—crucial—scenes directed by Ridley Scott were cut out?

O'Bannon has had his say in these pages. So, for that matter, has John Brosnan. Not to mention many readers. At the recent Cannes film festival I was able to pin down—at long last—one of the three producers of the runaway monster movie hit, writer and sometime director David Giler. He and his fellow producers, partners all in Brandywine Productions, have taken a lot of stick for messing up O'Bannon's work. It was, we felt, about time Giler spoke on behalf of the producers. Not that O'Bannon, or maybe even Starbursters will be overly pleased with much of what he has to say.

Giler, Walter Hill and Gordon Carroll, it may be remembered, once suggested they were perhaps the best people to make *Alien* because they knew nothing about science fiction at all. This proves to be the case when Giler mentions the dreaded term... sci-fi? One the other hand some of what he says, or

hints at, has definite logic—re-writing the original script out of its stock *Star Trekian* format, for example.

Aged 38, David Giler was born in New York and raised in Hollywood. His father, the late Bernie Giler, was a film and television scriptwriter. He encouraged David to write when recuperating from an illness. The result was a tv pilot, *The Gallant Men*, which Dad liked well enough to polish up and submit to a tv combine—giving his son full co-writer credit.

By the time, he'd finished with Hollywood High School, San Francisco State College and the University of California, David Giler had turned that sick-bed beginning into a career launch-pad. He followed his father's typewriter ribbons by supplying various episodes of both *The Man* and *The Girl From Uncle*, *Burke's Law* and *Kraft Theatre*.

His first movie work was co-writing the quite execrable screen version of Gore Vidal's satiric novel, *Myra Breckenridge*, with the lamentable Mike Sarne in 1970. Giler, at least, improved. In between providing *The Parallax View* (1974) for Warren Beatty and *Fun With Dick and Jane* (1977) for Jane Fonda and George Segal, Giler made his directing debut with his send-up script of *The Maltese Falcon* with executive producer George Segal as Sam Spade Jr, in *The Black Bird* (1975). The

publicity hype of this one stated it was "a falcon funny movie." Ho-ho! (It was, in fact, falcon terrible).

Since co-producing *Alien* (not to mention re-writing it, uncredited, with Walter Hill, his partner in Phoenix Productions), David Giler has been working again with Hill, producing *Southern Comfort* together among the Louisiana Cajuns. And the reason, perhaps, for Giler's annoying smugness at Cannes, was due to finishing this EMI film a half-mill under its \$-million budget. "When was the last time you heard that?" he crowed.

The film may provide comfort to O'Bannon and Co, in that it has absolute nothing to do with science fiction—not even sci-fil "Survival piece," says Giler. "National Guard Unit. Louisiana in the '70s. People join originally to get out of the Army. Weekend manoeuvres in the swamps. Get lost. Run into serious trouble with the Cajuns. Inadvertently violating the territorial imperative. Quite a tough piece. We hired a writer to script it. Then we re-wrote it."

Sounds familiar.

For his next project, Giler (and Hill) are making EMI's long-postponed *The Knight* (originally a Ridley Scott assignment). This, too, they've re-written and he's overly delighted to point out it has nothing to do with sword and sorcery, not that what he did





have to say much very much sense.

After this, Giler turns director again for his second film, an original comedy script of his own. Which no one, I suppose, will re-write. Unless it's him.

We met up at Cannes at a fairly crowded (most enjoyable) EMI lunch on the Carlton beach. There were more than enough people buzzing around to help Giler avoid answering—or hearing—certain questions. But the following tapescript is, I think, interesting enough... David Giler is no Larry Kasdan, that's for sure. Then again, nor am I. What's the chances of an *Alien* sequel?

Well, we've discussed it. The problem would appear to be too many companies involved. Your and Walter Hill's Phoenix, your two and Gordon Carroll's Brandywine Productions, Ronald Shusett's outfit with Dan O'Bannon and of course, Fox. No, it's just us and Fox. Who's us?

Us being Walter and me and our ex-partner Gordon Carroll. Just us. But since the change in administration, Fox doesn't want to know about any of the previous administration's films.

You mean Sherry Lansing is not keen to sequelise—capitalise on—Alan Ladd's winners? I find that hard to believe.

Well, I was talking to Gary Kurtz yesterday and he told me that Fox re-released *Star Wars* over Easter in America, to prove that it wouldn't do any business at the box-office. And, of course, it did huge business. Fox wanted to sell it off to television.

You're kidding?

No, it's true. It's very strange out there. We were trying to get them to re-release *Alien* and they won't do that either. They don't want to know about anything that they did in the past.

Or that they didn't do... I Right.

Would you have to make any *Alien II* with Fox anyway?

We would, yes. They won't give it to us. They won't make it. They won't sell it to us.

Okay, put it another way—do you want to make a sequel?

I think we should, yeah. I don't know if I want to do it myself, personally. I have other planned films. Walter and I have just finished *Southern Comfort*, we have *The Knight* to do, and I'm planning a comedy later on. But I think an *Alien* sequel should be made. If there's a market for it, it's a natural. (Pause).

We've got one, in fact.

You and Walter Hill have written it, you mean?

(He nods).

What can you tell us about it? Does it follow straight on from the last one?

No, we wouldn't start it with the last scene...

So the monster doesn't climb back into Sigourney's lap!

The alien is destroyed! I mean, he went outside, right. He's blown up. Burnt. Goner. Doesn't mean he hasn't got a brother or sister, does it?

Well, if you recall in that egg chamber, there were lots of other eggs down there. The other good part about the sequel is that all the other actors are gone except Sigourney. (Laugh). So we can start absolutely fresh. But not just do it all over again, please.

I don't seem to hear. In the ensuing crush, I don't dare voice the question again. I fear the answer).

Why were so many scenes cut, trimmed and altered in *Alien*? For instance, the crucial scene where Sigourney finds Dallas in the caccos... (Pause).

... That's funny because that's...

Funny? What's funny about it? The scene was shot wasn't it? How come it got cut?

It was shot, yeah. It didn't look very good.

That's why it was cut.

But it did help to explain things, didn't it?

It wasn't really absolutely essential. People who don't know about that scene, don't seem to miss it. It was in the novelisation and was obviously in the script. What's funny about it, is that Walter and I added that one in. Late. And shot it and it just wasn't really up to the standard of the rest of the movie. It didn't look good—in the sense of a man hanging there in a caccos. Part of our feeling was that we had to maintain the, you know, excellence in terms of visuals and production all the way through.

Not to mention the nastiness... (He laughs).

I mean it is a thoroughly nasty movie, isn't it? Quite the nastiest movie in recent years.

Yeah, I'm delighted to hear you say that. That was exactly the idea! (Laugh). It's very strange working on a movie like that, because your standards sort of change a bit. You look at something you've shot and you say, 'God that's revolting! It's disgusting! It's perfect! It's just what we want!' (He laughs again) It is nasty.

What was Dan O'Bannon's original script like.

I know he hasn't been very complimentary about what you guys did with it, but let's hear for once what you thought of his work?

I'll tell you what it was. It was all men. No women. They were straight military types. Talking "Yessir... No sir... Captain this, Captain that."

So we have you and Walter to thank for Sigourney Weaver?

Exactly.

She was the only non-nasty thing in the entire movie.

When we first read it—this is no secret—the script was not really very good. But it had this . . . *(he mimes the Chest-Burster)*. Walter read it first. He call me and said, "I may be absolutely out of my mind. This script is absolutely awful, but there's one scene in it that I think we should buy it and try this one."

I started to read it—and it was very long. I came to the . . . Well, we used to refer to them as The Face Hugger, The Chest Burster and The Big Boy. Well, I came to this Face Hugger and called Walter and said, "What are you thinking about?" He said, "Have you come to the big thing yet?" I said, "Sure, the thing that comes on his face." "Oh no, no, no, just read it—keep reading."

So I read some more, it was boring the ass off me, and then all of a sudden . . . oh god. We've all heard of great grossing movies. This was the grossest thing I ever heard of. The Chest Burster! So I called Walter and said, "Yeah, you're right!"

What was the next stage—re-writing?

So then we had O'Bannon and Shusetz come into the office . . . The Whale and The Mole, as we used to call 'em! *(Laugh)*. This was rather a shock to these two guys. Both nice fellas, but sci-fi *(sic)* buffs. Serious about it, you know. They were very offended when we indicated the changes we'd made . . . changing their characters completely, to the truck-drivers-in-space concept. So they didn't

like that we added women, either.

Who decided on the women?

I did that. We were about to hand the script in, when I said, "Wait a second. Hold it! This is a studio that's making *Julia*, *The Breaking Point*. You know what we could do? We could take this Clint Eastwood character and if we made it a girl, it'd be perfect." So we went back to the script, changing HE to SHE, that's all . . . for two of the guys. We couldn't have just one woman.

From what you say of the original, you make it sound like a dull Star Trek episode—minus Uhura, of course.

Well, the dialogue was just *(he winces)* . . . B-demonstration movie. We felt that if we





were going to make a science fiction movie, we should get away from the way they always talk in such movies, and dress in uniforms of different colours, you know, with all the zippers and the flashes. I'm sure that's why **The Black Hole** didn't work. I saw it finally the other day, like two weeks ago, and there they were... the uniforms and the flashes. That was more like O'Bannon's script. Awful! Terrible! It was such a huge chest, **The Black Hole**. Oh boy! You go into the black hole and it's heaven and all they gave you then was the credits...

*The one person no one has any complaint about in **Alien**—apart from Sigourney—is the director. How did a Hollywoodian like you unearth our Ridley Scott?*

I was here. And I saw **The Duellists**. You mean Cannes is useful to the film industry!

Oh yes. I saw **The Duellists** and it looked so extraordinary. I thought: Let this guy loose, you know? I didn't know he was a commercials director, I didn't know who the hell he was. I just thought, This is the man for us. Because there was a brief moment when Walter talked about directing it. But to do something like **Alien** is another kinda job. Walter was story orientated and all the rest of it—and the kinda patience you needed for it, the attention to detail and all of that was immense.

Come to that, I suppose you could have directed it yourself?

It's not my stuff... that's what I'm saying. I am going to direct again. I'm doing an original comedy script for mine this year. For Fox. Ridley's **Blade Runner** is going to be good, by the way I was on the set and it's a very good script.

*Meanwhile, what's the news of the other film you're doing with Walter, **Sword**, which you inherited from Ridley Scott?*

It's gone back to being **The Knight**. **Excalibur** was going to be called **The Knights**, that's why we changed it. We've re-written the script Ridley had.

Surprise, surprise!

Now we're talking about it with EMI. It has greatly changed, though, yes, from Ridley's day.

Does it go under the banner of sword and sorcery?

No, it doesn't. It goes under the banner of sword.

Nasty again?

No, no... I'm sure it'll be quite tough. The script is.

It sounds like a medieval version of all those Viet vets on a vengeance trip numbers, coming back from the war, finding their families wasted and going out for revenge, or shouldn't I say that? (Judging by his face, I shouldn't say that). It's more on Japanese lines. Kurosawa, I mean, not all these ninja films.

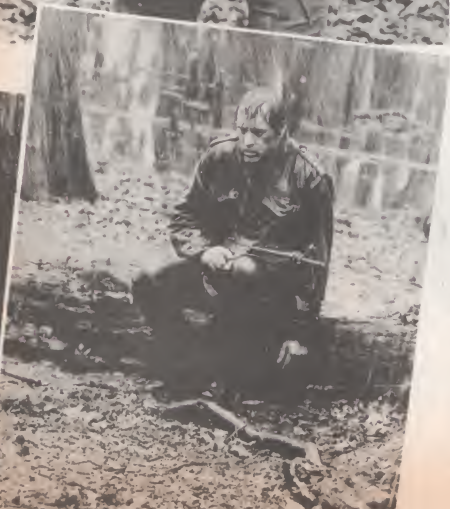
Is that an era that interests you?

Medievales? Yeah, very much. What appealed to me about it is that we all grew up seeing these movies.

We grew up seeing Errol Flynn which is rather different.

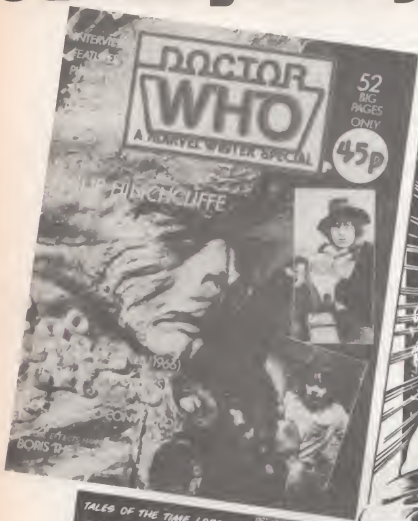
But it's still the same general area. Obviously you have to do something different.

This page: A series of stills from the current David Giler project, **Southern Comfort**. At bottom left is the crew of the **Nostramo** from **Alien**, a film on which Giler served as co-producer. As the names of the crew is one of the questions in our Christmas Quiz this issue we won't give the game away...!



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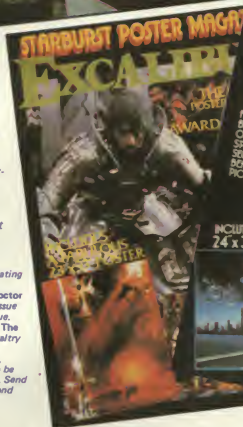
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